











# INSURRECTION

OF

## POLAND

IN 1830-31;

AND

## THE RUSSIAN RULE

PRECEDING IT SINCE 1815.

BY S. B. GNOROWSKI.

\* \* \* \* " O gens  
Infelix, cui te exitio fortuna reservat ?  
\* \* \* \*  
Si genus humanum et mortalia temnitis arma,  
At sperate Deos memores fandi atque nefandi."

LONDON :

JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

DA-35  
G55

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## INTRODUCTION.

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*Poland, in the Progress of Restoration, and at the Congress of Vienna.*

SINCE the last partition of Poland in 1795, her independence has never been entirely annihilated. Until 1806 it survived in the legions of Dombrowski and Kniaziewicz, fighting for the French in Italy, Egypt, Germany, and St. Domingo, where no less than 30,000 Poles perished. To their valour Bonaparte bore witness, saying, that “ they fought like “ devils ;” but when they demanded to share in the benefit secured by treaties, he only answered, “ that “ the prayers of every friend of freedom were for “ the brave Poles, but that time and destiny alone “ could re-establish them.” What he called destiny, they held to be the justice of their cause ; and, confident in its ultimate success, fought on, to their war-cry, “ Poland is not lost while we live\*.”

Fully sensible how important the Poles would prove to him as allies in the expedition of 1806,

\* The first line of a Mazurka, composed for the legions, which subsequently became the most popular of their national airs.

against the united forces of Prussia and Russia, Napoleon would gladly have persuaded Kosciuszko, then living at Fontainebleau, and whose call would have sufficed to raise their whole population, to join him. But Kosciuszko, suspecting that the military despot would prove not less treacherous than hereditary ones, gave a decided refusal. The more sanguine amongst the patriots were less sceptical, and the event, in this instance, seemed to justify their faith, for the battle of Jena (1806) enabled them to re-enter their country after ten years of voluntary exile. Their welcome, and the eagerness with which all classes took arms, forced from a French grenadier the exclamation so strongly characterising the effects of a foreign rule in Poland:—"Great God! Is it for this wretched country that the Poles sacrifice so many lives?" Kosciuszko's suspicions proved true. It had never been Napoleon's design to restore Poland. In a bulletin, bearing date the 1st of December, 1806, were these remarkable expressions:—

" Shall the throne of Poland be re-established,  
" and shall that great nation, springing from the  
" tomb, resume its life and independence? God  
" only, in whose hands is the issue of all events,  
" can decide this political problem; but, truly,  
" there has never been one more important and  
" interesting."

This phrase, " political problem," was a blunder, which did not pass unobserved by Russia, then in great anxiety at the conqueror's approach. Intent on

reversing all that his mother had done, Paul had already shown a disposition to restore the kingdom, and had caused the skeleton of Stanislaus to be crowned in its coffin—as he had before crowned that of his own father—when, after this last strange act, he was declared insane, and soon after strangled.

Moved by self-interest, rather than by a filial desire of vengeance, Alexander feigned an inclination to carry the scheme of Peter into effect; and whilst supporting Austria with his presence in 1805, he obtained, by intrigue, from her Polish subjects and from those of Prussia, an invitation to be their king, and actually bore that title for three days. His fear lest Napoleon, by wresting Galicia from Austria, should prepare the way for the restoration of the whole kingdom, induced this measure; his generosity increased, and he grew more and more lavish of promises and pity to the Poles, as it appeared more probable that Napoleon would attempt to humble Prussia and Austria, and stifle the coalition by their re-establishment. Sparing no pains to gain their love, to sow dissensions amongst them, and, lastly, to render them hostile towards the French, he sent for General Kniaziewicz, then living retired in Volhynia, to his head-quarters near Königsberg, to tell him that “the partition of Poland was a political  
“ crime, to which, had he then been emperor, he  
“ would never have consented, and which he now  
“ felt himself bound in conscience to repair, as far  
“ as lay in his power.” He then offered to equip

some Polish legions to be under the command of Kniaziewicz \*. At this time, however, the French had occupied Warsaw, and every Pole believed that a part at least of his country would again become independent, in which case the Polo-Russian legions would have been a protest of the Poles themselves against their own wishes. The general, therefore, remembering that “ ’Tis time to fear when tyrants seem “ to kiss,” declined the offer, saying that, “ he shud- “ dered at the bare idea of a fratricidal war.” The treaty of Tilsit (the 7th of July, 1807,) put an end to hostilities, and 43,000 square miles of Polish territory, wrested from Prussia, were then erected into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, under Frederick Augustus, king of Saxony †, in whose family the Polish throne had been declared hereditary, by the constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791. At the same time the city of Dantzic was declared free, and the district of Bialystock (3,200 square miles) was ceded to Alexander, who did not scruple to despoil his Prussian ally, and had further insisted that no part of Poland should recover its name. Thus was Poland dismembered for the fourth time ; and if Alexander had condemned the former partitions, it was only because the whole of the kingdom did not fall to his share.

The duchy of Warsaw answered Napoleon’s pur-

\* Memoirs of Count Oginski.

† He was the son of Augustus III., King of Poland.

poses. It equipped an army of 30,000 men, of which the greater part was employed against the independence of Spain. Prince Joseph Poniatowski could, in 1809, only bring 9000 men to oppose 30,000 Austrians under the Archduke Ferdinand; yet even these few repulsed their adversaries, and reconquered a considerable part of Galicia. Their further progress was, however, paralyzed by Alexander, who, apprehensive for his own interests, hastened with 48,000 men to give a feigned support to Napoleon.

By the treaty of Schönbrunn (October 14, 1809) the palatinates of Lublin, Podlachia, Sandomir, and Cracow (20,000 square miles), and one-half of the salt mines of Wieliczka, were added to the duchy; Austria retaining the rest of Galicia, the province of Tarnopol (2600 square miles) excepted, which Alexander reclaimed for himself. In this fifth partition of Poland Napoleon was the less excusable, as Austria had offered to renounce the whole of Galicia in consideration of a trifling compensation in Illyria.

Since the treaty of Tilsit, the two great objects—the partition of Turkey, and the prevention of the re-establishment of Poland—inseparably connected, had filled the mind of Alexander. Napoleon, on the other hand, hampered by Spanish affairs, and more than ever needing the emperor's co-operation against England, had, at the conference of Erfurt, made immense concessions to him, actually engaging not to move in favour of the Poles. The late additions to the

duchy rendering Alexander apprehensive that he in his turn might be called upon to expiate his share in the partition, he demanded from Napoleon an explicit promise, that the kingdom should never be restored.

To avoid the ridicule as well as the odium attendant on his assuming a tone suited only to the Deity, Napoleon at once cut the knot, by transmitting the following declaration to the Duke de Vincence, his ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg :—  
“ *Si je signalais que le royaume de Pologne ne sera  
“ jamais rétabli, c’est que je voudrais le rétablir, et  
“ l’infamie d’une telle déclaration serait effacée par le  
“ fait qui le démentirait\*.*”

The mere existence of the duchy was, indeed, under any circumstances, a source of much uneasiness to Russia; since, in the event of a French war, her Polish provinces would inevitably separate from her *de facto*, and her expulsion from Europe might be the consequence. So impressed was Alexander by this idea, that, on receiving tidings of Napoleon’s marriage with the Archduchess Louisa, he is reported to have shed tears, and to have uttered these memorable words :—“ I foresee the fate of Russia; the  
“ moment is approaching when I shall bid farewell to  
“ Europe and welcome to the steppes of Asia.” A rupture between these two autocrats becoming daily more probable, Alexander endeavoured to preserve by

\* Bignon, Histoire de France sous Napoléon.

intrigue what he could not defend by force. “Do you desire a constitution?” said he to some of the Poles at St. Petersburg—“You shall have it. Would you be again united? You shall be so. Why should not I take the title of King of Poland, if that would please you—(*si cela peut vous faire plaisir*\*).” So artfully did he conduct himself, that it almost seemed as if he wished to snatch from Napoleon the glory of the re-establishment.

To give some colouring to his flattering promises, he affected much anxiety for the happiness of his Polish subjects; and that those of the Vistula might understand his disposition, and not pity their brethren beyond the Bug, whilst these on their part should have no cause to envy the independence of the others, he summoned Count Oginski to listen to a scheme for erecting the provinces into a kingdom, united with Russia, as Hungary is with Austria; as well as to “his grand project,” unless prevented by fresh war, for ameliorating the condition of the inhabitants. Eight distinguished Lithuanians were commissioned to prepare the draft of a constitution for the provinces, and two Polish generals were to draw up a plan for organising a national army. The necessity of calming the patriotism which found its focus in the duchy, and of consigning, if possible, to oblivion, the injuries inflicted by Russia on the Lithuanians during the preceding fifty years; the

\* Memoirs of Count Oginski.

necessity, in short, of paralysing the efforts of the Poles in the approaching struggle, prompted him to these measures, which have since been deemed magnanimous; and many Lithuanians, though proverbial for caution, fell into the snare, hoping to enjoy from him the benefits of a constitution, whilst their own efforts might have rendered them free and independent.

Napoleon, on his part, did much to counteract the exertions of the Poles. His evasive answer, when requested at Vilno (1812) to proclaim their independence, might be epitomized in the thrice repeated words—if—if—if. To comprehend his motives on that occasion, it should be recollected, that he did not wish irrevocably to break with Alexander, by depriving him of his Polish provinces; that the object of his campaign was to crush England, and with that view to dictate from Moscow a treaty, despatching a joint force of French and Russians to India \*.

\* Prior to the campaign of 1812, he had sent M. Gardanne to Persia, ostensibly for scientific purposes, but really to discover the best overland route to India. M. Gardanne corresponded with the emperor from Teheran, *viâ* Russia, and it was some time before the Russian government suspected the object of his mission. At the commencement of the war of 1812, his maps and papers fell accidentally into the hands of the Czar, who then engaged him and his thirteen companions in his own service. A copy of Napoleon's plan was subsequently found in the War Office at Paris, and of this Alexander possessed himself during his stay there. The proposed campaign had been calculated for 70,000 men, French and Russian. They were to reach the Indus in less than



Believing his quota of men to be already sufficient, he discouraged the Poles from arming; 70,000, nevertheless, joined his army. The frost defeated his gigantic schemes. Had he followed a simpler and less unjust course, and taken up his winter quarters in Poland, he might still have been Emperor, and Poland might have been free. This unlooked-for overthrow inflamed the ambition of Alexander, who next determined to appropriate the whole of Poland, by means in which the Poles themselves should concur. With this view, therefore, whilst in Paris, he paid great court to all those who distinguished themselves against Russia, especially to Kosciuszko, placing an honorary guard at his residence, and overwhelming him with offers for his ill-fated countrymen. Sensible of their helpless condition, Kosciuszko confined himself to the following demands:—"That the Emperor should grant them full  
" amnesty—that he should proclaim himself King of  
" Poland, and give a constitution resembling that of  
" Britain." Would the Emperor but grant these conditions, Kosciuszko, who had refused to listen to Napoleon, offered, though out of health, to serve Alexander in person, as a faithful subject. The Czar purposely delayed his answer till the 3rd of May—the day dear to every Pole—and then promised all—the best proof that he intended to perform little.

119 days, the principal stations being Taganrog, Palubiarskaya, Czarytchyn, Astrachan, and Astrabad, from which place Napoleon assigned forty-five days march to the river.

Whilst Kosciuszko and other eminent patriots were thus begging for a constitutional Poland under his sceptre, the Congress of Vienna, moved by the active though invisible influence of Prince Adam Czartoryski, resolved to re-establish the whole kingdom ; not from any respect to national rights, since at the same moment they were violating those of other countries, but from a sense of self-interest and self-preservation.

The fall of Constantinople being the inevitable result of the partition of Poland, and of most consequence to Great Britain, Lord Castlereagh was the first to demand the complete re-establishment of Poland under a dynasty of her own. Prince Metternich declared that the Emperor was ready to make the greatest sacrifices to effect this consummation, and Prince Talleyrand supported these ministers with great force of argument. Prussia merely offered to restore her share for a compensation in Germany. Alexander was determined, at all events, to wrest from Europe the nation thus considered essential to her future security, and hoped so to contrive as to make the Poles themselves accessory to his designs.

His troops still occupied the duchy of Warsaw, and a Polish army was by his orders being rapidly organized throughout the territory, although he was pledged by the treaty of Reichenbach (27th of June, 1813), and by that of Töplitz (the 9th of September, 1813), to decide, in common with Prussia and

Austria, upon the ultimate destiny of the duchy. He endeavoured, by every kind of intrigue, to force the Congress into acquiescence with his ambitious views. With this object he sent Constantine from Vienna to Warsaw, where, on the 11th of December, 1814, he issued a stirring patriotic proclamation, calling on them to arm for the defence of their fatherland; and admonishing them, “that only by unbounded confidence in Alexander could they attain that happy state which others would promise, but which he alone could confer.” The Congress, however, was not to be persuaded that the Poles would, from attachment to Alexander, decline freedom, power, and independence; and the rapacity of Russia caused such indignation, that on the 15th of February, 1815, a treaty, offensive and defensive, was secretly concluded between England, France, and Austria. A European war could alone have cut this Gordian knot, when the sudden landing of Napoleon from Elba, in March, changed the aspect of affairs, most fatally for Poland. The allies, who now regarded the smallest diminution of strength as ruinous to the common cause, and did not expect the new struggle to terminate without the aid of Russia, consented to propitiate Alexander by despoiling Poland. A sixth partition, therefore, took place, though under auspices more favourable to her regeneration at no very distant epoch. To Alexander were assigned three-fourths of the duchy of Warsaw (46,200 square miles), nicknamed the kingdom of Poland; to

Prussia, the Grand Duchy of Posen, with Thorn, Elbing, and Dantzic; and Austria retained Galicia, with the entire salt mines of Wieliczka. The city of Cracow, the ancient capital of Poland, with a territory annexed to it of 500 square miles, was declared free, independent, and strictly neutral.

The stipulations for the Poles were, that the kingdom to which the full enjoyment of the constitution was guaranteed, should be united to the Russian empire, the Czar being allowed to take the title of king only on this condition, but with liberty to confer on that state, possessing a distinct administration of its own, such extension of territory as he might judge expedient; in other words, to incorporate with it the other Polish provinces under his rule—that the Polish subjects of the other contracting powers should also be respectively governed by liberal and national institutions,—that they should have representative governments, and, finally, that trade, and the navigation of all rivers and canals throughout the whole of the country, as it existed previous to 1772, should be thrown open to all Poles equally, of whatever government they might be the subjects.

Every expression of the several plenipotentiaries clearly shows that they did not themselves believe in any permanent realization of a scheme so truly Utopian, as that the Poles could exist as a nation, and enjoy all the privileges of nationality, except independence, under several govern-

ments, each following its respective line of policy. “ *Without retracting his former representations,*” said Lord Castlereagh, “ *he should urge on the partitioning powers to pursue a conduct which might do them honour in the eyes of their Polish subjects, and guarantee their happiness ; for the thwarting of their nationality would only occasion revolts, and awaken the remembrance of past misfortunes.* By that conduct, too, the fear may be removed that any danger to the liberty of Europe should result from the union of Poland with the Russian empire, already so powerful—a danger, which would not be imaginary, if the military force of the two countries should ever be united under the command of an ambitious and warlike monarch.”

Prince Metternich’s protest was yet more remarkable :—“ The conduct of the Emperor of Austria can have left no doubt in the mind of the allied powers, that the re-establishment of Poland as an independent state would have fully accomplished the wishes of his Imperial Majesty ; and that he would have been willing to make the greatest sacrifices to promote the restoration of that ancient and beneficial arrangement..... Austria has never considered free and independent Poland as an inimical or rival power, and the principles upon which his illustrious predecessor acted were abandoned only under the pressure of circumstances, which the sovereigns of Austria had it not in their power to controul.”

The moral view taken by Prince Talleyrand, was of a higher order, when, with all the authority of genius, he observed, “ that the partition of Poland “ was the prelude, the cause, and perhaps an “ apology for the commotions to which Europe “ had been exposed ; and, in order to prevent them “ for the future, it was necessary to restore to complete independence the Polish nation, so worthy “ of regard by its antiquity, its valour, its misfortunes, and the services it has rendered to the “ world.” In short, the language of Europe seemed to be, “ so long as you continue to be Poles, I am “ secure ;” and thus sanctioned the object of the insurrection of 1830, fifteen years before its occurrence. Alexander praised the generosity of the Congress, and expressed the satisfaction he felt in fully concurring with the liberal sentiments expressed by Lord Castlereagh. The decision of the Congress gave much uneasiness to Kosciuszko, who, however, still fancying he perceived some hope for Poland in the article of the treaty empowering Alexander to give an internal extension to the kingdom, which of course implied the reunion of Lithuania, Volhynia, Podolia, and Ukraina, requested the Czar to give him some further information on that head. But Alexander had gained his point, and no longer deemed him worthy of an answer. With a bleeding heart Kosciuszko then addressed a letter to Prince Adam Czartoryski (June 1815), in which, amongst other things, he thus wrote :—“ I will not act without

“ some guarantee on behalf of my country, nor  
“ will I be deluded by false hopes. I hardly know  
“ what warrant I have but my own ardent desires,  
“ for the expectation that he (Alexander) will fulfil  
“ his promise to me, and to so many of my coun-  
“ trymen, by extending the frontiers of Poland to  
“ the Dwina and the Dnieper; such an arrange-  
“ ment would establish some sort of proportion, in  
“ strength and numbers, between ourselves and the  
“ Russians, and so contribute to mutual respect  
“ and firm friendship.” . . . . “ We had the Emperor’s  
“ sacred word that this union should take place.  
“ May Providence be your guide! For my own  
“ part, as I can no longer be of any service to my  
“ country, I shall take refuge in Switzerland.”  
Kosciuszko’s refusal to go to Poland was a reproof  
to the duplicity of Alexander, who retaliated by  
stigmatising the virtuous patriot, as an indolent  
old man.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *The Administration of the Constitutional Kingdom of Poland.*

THE kingdom of Poland as established by Congress, was a mere appendix to Russia, the European powers having prevented it from becoming an integral part of the Russian empire. Alexander had now to render it so ; and the Poles eagerly seized the opportunity, that seemed to present itself, for making that part of their country an engine for the re-establishment of the whole. Thus, may the history of the ephemeral kingdom be epitomized. The edifice, therefore, constructed hastily and without a solid foundation, was doomed to fall, and with no little risk to the crafty architects who had raised it with that design. The first act of Alexander's reign was a fraud. By a proclamation of the 25th of May, 1815, he announced to the Poles, " That the maintenance of the equilibrium of Europe did not admit of their re-union, and that it was desirable that their country should so exist, as neither to excite the jealousy of their neighbours, nor create war in Europe." These being the very reasons adduced at the Congress, why Poland should be made independent, and he neglected no



opportunity of impressing on the Poles, that the guilt of the sixth partition, lay not with him, but with Europe. Shortly after the basis of a constitution for the kingdom was published, with the clause that Poland should be united to Russia by the sole tie of the constitutional charter. But when the constitution itself was promulgated, on the 24th of December of the same year, it no longer contained that clause, and thus he cannot be said to have observed the Vienna treaty even for a single day. By this charter the government was made to consist of the King, the two Houses of the Diet, the Chamber of Senators, to be appointed by the king, and the Chamber of Deputies, to be elected by the nobility and commons. The Diet was to meet every second year at Warsaw, to sit for thirty days, and to deliberate only on propositions brought forward by the royal command. The king had power to appoint a lieutenant, to be assisted by a state or administrative council, consisting of ministers and councillors, also selected by the monarch. The liberty of the press, and the independence of the courts of justice, were guaranteed, and the nation also was to possess the important prerogative of voting the subsidies. This was a far more liberal constitution than those granted to their Polish provinces, by Austria and Prussia, which powers preserved a mere phantom of the Vienna treaty. Yet they were

perhaps, more sincere than he, who, pledging himself to grant more, thought only how to take back what he had already given. Lithuania, but lately flattered with the hope of constitutional liberty, became the object of persecution, and it was consequently with much reluctance, that Alexander, whilst at Warsaw, would consent to give audience to Count Oginski at the head of a Lithuanian deputation. “ I have established the kingdom,” he told them, “ upon a very firm basis, for I have “ forced Europe to guarantee, by treaties, its existence ;” the reverse being exactly the case :—“ I “ shall do the rest as I have promised—but confidence is necessary,” &c. The disappointed Lithuanians quitted Warsaw, resolved henceforth to look to their own exertions for the salvation of their country. Alexander was not long in discovering the false position in which his new constitutional kingdom placed him, not only with regard to his hereditary empire, absolutely governed, and his eleven millions of Polish subjects, but also as respected foreign cabinets, and the whole of liberal Europe. Muscovy, that is, the Asiatic aristocracy, became jealous on finding, that, even after all the misfortunes of the Poles, the possession of certain privileges was still ensured to them. “ If,” said the Muscovites, “ we, the conquerors, obey an absolute “ autocrat, why should he, at the same time, be the “ constitutional monarch of the Poles ?” Foreign

cabinets, on the other hand, felt their security to depend, in some degree, on their confining his authority in the kingdom within constitutional limits; and on compelling him to respect Polish nationality in the other provinces. The opinion of the liberal party in Europe, whose applause he had courted, also tended to keep him in check; for having announced himself in Vienna, Paris, and London, as the patron of liberal institutions, he dared not and could not at once assert himself a tyrant in Poland. He chose, therefore, the more prudent course of gradually undermining the constitution, in order, finally, to merge the constitutional excrescence in his imperial dominions: a course quite congenial to him whom Napoleon had characterized as "*le plus fin des Grecs*."

From that time commenced a series of encroachments on the charter, which, notwithstanding the responsibility of ministers, remained unpunished; since it was no difficult task for the absolute Czar to absolve his ministers from their share in the transgressions of the constitutional sovereign. For Europe he had constitutional exhibitions and speeches at the opening and closing of the Diet. To establish his despotism as securely in Warsaw as at St. Petersburg, he left there his brother Constantine, thus rendering the government a combination of constitutional authority with unlimited absolutism. The appointment (at the suggestion of

the Grand Duke, who hated every man of merit\*), of a decrepit old general as lieutenant of the kingdom, instead of Prince Czartoryski, to whose exertions the nation chiefly owed its present improved condition, afforded sufficient proof, to a few clear-sighted individuals, of Alexander's insincerity. The majority, however, were dazzled; the monarch himself seemed so delighted with *his* work, as he termed the constitution, that the first meeting of the Diet, in 1818, was passed in mutual congratulations. Alexander lauded the liberal institutions to the skies, renewed his promise to incorporate the sister countries, and promised to limit his autocratism in Russia by a constitution†. The representatives scarcely knew how sufficiently to express their grateful reverence; but such harmony did not last long; the deputies availed themselves of their prerogative to comment on the report of the state council, and pointed out, with all due respect, that no judicial authorities, according to the constitution, had yet been established; that taxes were not equally levied; that

\* The Grand Duke used to say, "*Ceci sont des gens comme il faut, j'en conviens; mais ceux-là sont des gens—comme il m'en faut.*"

† The Emperor Francis of Austria, who had refused to give his Italian subjects a constitution, on reading the speech of Alexander, exclaimed with his usual naiveté: "*So falsch bin ich nicht.*"—"So false am not I.")

the liberty of the press was not secured; nor national schools founded. Their boldness displeased the emperor, who returned for answer, "That the Diet was not privileged to censure the government, but only to deliberate on its proposed measures. That, for the future, it was to confine itself to this simple proceeding, and refrain from propagating constitutional theories, only calculated to produce mischief." This new doctrine, by which the national representation would be transformed into a royal privy council, was followed up by the total abolition of the freedom of the press, and by depriving the Diet of its prerogative of voting the budget, which was now left entirely to the caprice of the executive.

Two years and a half had elapsed since its first session, when the Diet assembled for the second time, in September 1820. The character of the constitutional kingdom was now accurately designated by Alexander, in his speech to the representatives from the throne:—"In summoning you to work with me for the consolidation of your national institutions, I have followed the impulse of my heart. These institutions being the result of my confidence in you, &c." . . . and further, "That the duration of the Polish name depended on the strict observance by the nation of Christian morals;" which was equivalent to saying, "I have given you a constitutional existence, because such was my pleasure, and will annihilate it

“ when I shall think fit.” But such was not the light in which the origin of the kingdom, and the obligations of the constitutional monarch, were regarded by the members of the Diet.

Besides the summary punishment with which the nation was visited for the observations made during the first session, the rule of Constantine, generally, was that of a barbarian. Students and editors of the press were persecuted; the freedom of conversation, even, was checked by the introduction of a secret police, and the many cruelties committed in consequence of its denunciations; the liberty of individuals was daily violated; and the provincial administration generally oppressive, and, in some districts, intolerable. The system which Alexander wished to establish gradually, contrary, probably, to his design, was developed with frightful rapidity; and excited in the Diet a powerful opposition, of which Vincent and Bonaventura Niemoiowski, representatives of the palatinate of Kalish, were the leaders.

Anxious to gratify the sovereign, the Diet, during its first session had, rather prematurely perhaps, voted a criminal code; but as the law would avail little without adequate means of enforcing it, ministers now required the Diet to sanction another, for proceedings in criminal cases, framed evidently with a view to legalise the caprices of the discretionary power vested in the Grand Duke Constantine.

The representatives, from the conviction that it

was better to preserve the *statum quo*, than to frame bad laws, almost unanimously rejected the ministerial proposals ; Vincent Niemoiowski, in particular, materially contributing to this result, by exclaiming —“ I know that there is but a step from the “ Capitol to the Tarpeian rock, but nothing shall “ deter me from uttering the truth,—the charter “ is national property ; the king” (be it remembered that that king was the autocrat of all the Russias) “ has no right, either to take it away, or to “ change it. We have lost the liberty of the press “ —individual liberty is gone—the right of property has been violated. Now they would “ abolish the responsibility of ministers,—what “ will be left of the constitution? *Stat magni “ nominis umbra!* Let us rather at once resign “ fallacious guarantees, serving only as snares to “ the good faith of the patriots who trusted in “ them: *ut satim liceat certos habuisse dolores!*”

The boldness and self-devotion of the two brothers had secured general esteem, and the Czar resolved on punishing them, as a warning to all who should dare to oppose him. His dissatisfaction appeared in his speech at the closing of the Diet:—“ Following an illusion,” said he, “ but too “ common in the present age, you have sacrificed “ the hopes which a sagacious confidence would “ have realized. You have retarded the work of “ your country’s restoration.” He alluded by this both to the incorporation of the sister countries



and to the prolonged existence of the kingdom. The address of the deputies was still more displeasing to him, and he prohibited the ministers from complying with it in any degree, assigning, as his reason, "that he alone could explain the constitution, for being its author he must best know his own intentions." Being unwilling, however, that his quarrel with the Diet should become public, he instructed his ministers to make a semi-official communication to the electors, of the grounds of his dissatisfaction with the representatives. This appeal could only expose him to ridicule, as it was, in fact, the sovereign calling upon the nation to censure its representatives for having opposed his encroachments. The ministers addressed the electors through the palatinate councils\*; some reproved the illegal insinuation of the angry monarch, others yielded, terror-struck. The councils for the Kalish palatinate alone refused to give any answer to this unconstitutional proceeding. Not long afterwards, the Niemoiowskis were elected members of their palatinate council, which so incensed Alexander, that he abolished the council, and refused to restore it until its representatives should give the sovereign,

\* The duties of the palatinate councils, composed of officers nominated by electoral assemblies, were to appoint judges for the first hearing, and the first appeals; to assist in forming the list, and selecting the candidates for the offices of administration, and to watch over the concerns of their respective palatinates.



either in or out of the Diet, a sufficient guarantee for their better conduct in future.

This suspension of the constitution in one part of the kingdom did not yet tranquillize Alexander, who was so alarmed by the Kalish opposition, that he anxiously sought for some pretext for terminating the existence of the kingdom, and soon found one in the state of its finances. A small annual deficit, arising rather from mismanagement than from disability in the country to meet its own expenditure, called forth a royal rescript to the state council, bearing date 25th May, 1821, and containing these words :—“ Matters have at length arrived at a point  
“ where the question no longer regards the aboli-  
“ tion of this or that office, the continuance or  
“ relinquishment of certain public works, but the  
“ ascertaining, experimentally, whether the resources  
“ of the kingdom be competent to the expenses of a  
“ separate government, or whether, their inadequacy  
“ being proved, a new order of things shall be  
“ established.”

An appeal to the nation by Prince Lubecki, the new minister of finance, soon raised by voluntary subscriptions the sum necessary to supply the deficit, and thus postponed the critical moment ; but what value could any Pole attach to this fragment of their country, this mockery of a constitution ? The declaration of the Czar was with many patriots the signal to prepare for insurrection.

Some writers assume two different periods in the

opinions of Alexander, the one of constitutional liberalism, the other of unlimited absolutism, and suppose that his generous views were altered by reflecting on the revolutions in Naples and Spain, the student associations in Germany, and the symptoms of liberal opinions amongst his own troops, especially among those who had resided in France for several years under the command of General Woronzoff. His duplicity towards the Poles at the commencement of his reign has been already described; and if, from 1815 to 1821, he amused himself by acting the liberal Czar, it was only because he felt himself compelled to show some deference to the potentates, who, at the Congress of Vienna, had, in the anxiety they manifested for Polish independence, betrayed their apprehensions at his growing power. But when the attention of Austria was diverted by the revolutions just alluded to, and Prince Metternich had come to the erroneous conclusion that Europe had more to fear from liberalism than from Muscovite ambition, the motives vanished which had induced Alexander to temporize, and the congresses of Troppau and Leybach, so far from curbing, rather enabled him openly to throw off the mask of the constitutional king. The constitutional character of the government was abolished, and from that time forwards replaced by oppression in the fiscal department, the spirit of darkness in the public schools, and of ignorant servility throughout the whole administrative system.

To have placed one palatinate under interdict,—to threaten to transform the kingdom into a Russian government, was deemed by Alexander insufficient to show the inhabitants what they were to understand by the constitution, and the consequences they might expect from a longer parliamentary insubordination, as the opposition of the diet was styled at St. Petersburg. Believing that the presence of the public encouraged the representatives to reject the ministerial bills, he added, on the 13th of February 1825, an article to the charter, abolishing the publicity of debates, “in order,” he said, “to consolidate his work.” Having taken these precautions, he summoned the third diet (the last during his life,) for May 1825.

Not one had yet assembled under such unfavourable auspices. A criminal prosecution, purposely got up against him by the Czarewitch Constantine, had deprived Bonaventura Niemoiowski of his seat, and his brother Vincent had been compelled to sign a document, purporting “that he had offended “his sovereign, who forbade him ever again to “appear in his presence.” In signing this, Vincent Niemoiowski added an express declaration that he did not thereby resign his seat in the diet, as the king was present only at its opening and close; but Constantine interpreted it as the renunciation of his representative mission. Determined that no personal danger should deter him from fulfilling his sacred duty, he proceeded to Warsaw. That

which he had foreseen, but did not fear, occurred. He was arrested at the barrier by Constantine and the police, and sent under an escort of gens d'armes to his estate, where he was detained prisoner till 1830. The freedom of representatives, the last guarantee of the constitution, was thus violated in his person ; and a session opened under such circumstances could no longer be an object of interest. The terror-stricken diet, deprived of its magnanimous members, shut up from the public, and insulted by the presence of Russian reporters, consented to all that the ministers demanded. But what might be the subject of debate, was no longer the important point. The late outrage would have justified the diet in, at least, keeping within the limits of the parliamentary *veto* ; and the king would have been compelled to dissolve the rebellious house, and to order a new election, which might have brought the people and their foreign masters into absolute collision. But the deputies, thinking the time was not yet arrived for such an extreme measure, considered it their duty to temporize, and, by submission, to protract the existence of constitutional Poland.

*The rule of the Grand Duke Constantine.*

Considered with reference to its diets, the kingdom was a mere concession made to Europe by the crafty Alexander. Its real form is about to be

exhibited under the discretionary government of the Czarewitch Constantine, commander-in-chief of the Polish army.

Some fatality persecuting Poland made Constantine, the most extraordinary and original man ever known in the annals of the world, her master. The abhorrence, for instance, felt by a son for the murderers of his father, is so natural a feeling, that it ought to offend no one, still less become the scourge of many millions; yet the Poles, and they alone, were foredoomed to atone for the filial piety of one member of the Muscovite dynasty. La Harpe, his preceptor, and others who knew the Czarewitch personally, have given him credit for kind-heartedness; and the death of Paul produced very different impressions on the two brothers. Alexander, intent on reigning, forgot all besides. Constantine forgot nothing, and for his father's death vowed hatred to all Russians, determined some day to take exemplary revenge on them. All those whom Paul had persecuted, (and the number was considerable, for he had not fallen by the hands of a few obscure assassins, but through widely spread conspiracy) became after his death partisans of his successor. Constantine swore eternal hatred against them. Alexander, on the contrary, looked to these very men for the security of his throne, stained with the blood of his father and his grandfather. Yet this contrast of feeling did not disturb the harmony between the brothers. No

Czar, Paul himself not excepted, had been so savage and violent as was Constantine. It is one of the mysteries of Providence, that such a man should have been destined by birth to possess absolute power. To have allowed him to remain in St. Petersburg, would only have been exposing him to his father's fate; to regard him as heir-presumptive would have compromised, not only the empire, but autocracy itself. The only alternative was to keep him at a distance, and Alexander, therefore detained him in Lithuania, while the duchy of Warsaw existed, and after Napoleon's fall, in the kingdom of Poland.—The love of woman seems no less natural a feeling than filial affection. Constantine became passionately attached to a Polish lady, Joanna Grudzinska, of a noble but not wealthy family. Strange to say, even this circumstance served but to extend the Russian yoke, and to protract its duration, over her countrymen. He renounced his right to the empire to become her husband. Alexander eagerly removed every obstacle to his divorce from a princess of Saxe Coburg\*,

\* This lady was the elder sister of the Duchess of Kent. Their union was rendered unhappy by the preference of the Czarewitch for a Swiss woman, whom even after his second marriage he still retained, till Alexander one day compelled her to quit Warsaw at twenty-four hours notice. Constantine, in his rage, would have placed her under the protection of the constitution. "*Je la mets sous la protection de la constitution,*" he exclaimed; but Alexander only laughed at him.

and obtained the consent of the Holy synod, and the empress mother. He added, however, to the laws respecting the imperial family, the important clause, by which any of its members, marrying a person of inferior rank, should forfeit his prerogatives, and the issue of such marriage be incapable of inheriting the crown. The marriage with Joanna Grudzinska, thenceforth called princess Lowicka, was celebrated on the 27th of May, 1820. Nineteen months afterwards, Constantine visited St. Petersburg, where, on the 19th of January, 1822, he signed the memorable abdication, in which he acknowledged himself deficient in the mental capacity and strength, requisite for the possessor of supreme power\*. Hence it would appear to have required nearly two years to persuade him to confirm, formally, the declaration which he must have given verbally at the epoch of his second marriage. He received, as the reward of his abdication, the appanage of the kingdom and of all the Russo-Polish provinces, except the government of Kiow. By this singular transaction, Alexander, in order to lighten the sacrifice thus made by Constantine, resigned to a certain extent his personal influence, not only on the affairs of the kingdom, but also on those of the sister countries ; a striking instance of

\* “ Ne me croyant ni l'esprit, ni la capacité, ni la force nécessaire, si jamais j'étais revêtu de la haute dignité à laquelle je suis appelé par ma naissance.”



the unfortunate truth, that the fall of nations too often depends on the domestic interests of their rulers.

The barbarian who had professed to have neither mind, nor capacity, nor strength, to govern the Muscovites, and whose neck\*, as he himself said at Dresden, was not *strong enough* for being Czar at St. Petersburg, found himself all-sufficient for oppressing fifteen millions of Poles, and probably only because he did not tremble for his life amongst them. He was, indeed, said to love them; but it was with such love as children feel for the toys which they amuse themselves by breaking. Poland, sacrificed for the security of Russia, became at once his appanage, his prey, and his sport. In other countries, despotism may be systematically and logically exercised; in Warsaw it was the result, partly of system, and partly of Constantine's aberration, caprice, and temper. An inhuman tyrant, possessed of exalted genius, may revolt, but he does not degrade his subjects. He may rouse their intellect, and stir up their spirit of revenge; but he does not debase their national character. But the endurance of a harlequin, with a field-

\* He frequently visited the court of Saxony, where, being asked one day by the Queen dowager why he had abdicated the throne of Russia, he paused a little, and then made her the following extraordinary answer:—"C'est que, voyez-vous, Madame, en Russie il faut avoir un cou fort, et moi, je suis un peu chatouilleux."



marshal's staff, dreaming of craft and despotism, is a satire on the sense and courage of the sufferers. Such was Constantine. This persecutor of students and of Jews, this terror of degraded women, with whom he often quarrelled, and ordered them to shave their heads;—this spy, trembling and suspicious, listening with a thousand ears to the low whispers, to the loud complaints, and to the secret councils of the nation;—this executioner of soldiers, whom for a button fastened contrary to regulation, a false step in march, or an ill-adjusted knapsack, he deprived of honour, liberty, or life;—this architect and gaoler of state prisons;—this distributor in person of blows and stripes;—this doubtful, intermediate point in the hierarchy of beings, placed on the confines, where the brute race ceases, and the human begins, half-man, half-monkey, in whom the Asiatic physiognomy, Kalmuck features, bristle eyebrows, flattened and turned-up nose, and hoarse and stifled voice struggled for mastery with some few traces of the European countenance, and a studiously polished manner; this type of the savage of Muscovy as propagated under the Tatar rule; this incarnation of her spirit, institutions, and history, ruled Poland for fifteen years. Perhaps destiny would not or dared not push further this irony of fortune. What the hat of authority placed upon a staff was to the countrymen of William Tell, such was Constantine's, with its white feather, to the Poles. For fifteen

years were they doomed to bow to this hat, unless warned in time by the rattling of his carriage wheels to escape in all directions.

Let it not, however, be supposed that his despotism was without a plan, and a deep one. His pleasure, like that of the fiend, lay in the moral ruin of good men; and his business was to convert honest patriots into ruffians, and to degrade any man, distinguished by chivalrous deeds, by integrity, by talent, by civic merit, into a member of his household,—a loiterer in his anti-chamber. His modes of effecting this object were various. Some were dishonoured by public insults; others, by a show of special favour. Some were imprisoned—others marked with ignominy, or exposed to the ordeal of public contempt. To shake hands with him being held infamous in Poland, the Grand Duke, aware of this, would offer his arm to one suspected malcontent; embrace another as his friend; or by a pat on the shoulder, or a pinch on the cheek (his customary caress) devote a third to the mistrust of his countrymen. Frequently his cunning was successful, and nothing remained for the victim but to become secretly or openly the oppressor of his brethren, or to end his life in some subterranean dungeon. Thus, on the square of Saxony, where Constantine was in the daily habit of mustering the troops for hours, did many a warrior, honoured in the campaigns of Kosciuszko and Napoleon, survive his well earned reputation.

One part of his satanic scheme, was to immerse the nation in ignorance. There was a period, truly an appalling one, when he prohibited writing—and no one wrote: when he forbade thought—and no one presumed to think. Torrents of national blood might hardly wash away such ignominy.

Novosilzoff, the intimate friend of Constantine, suggested the introduction of this system of ignorance into the national schools. This Russian senator had been appointed imperial commissary, under the pretext of facilitating the intercourse between the constitutional kingdom and the empire; but having once obtained a seat in the state council, and a voice in its consultations, he acquired much general influence. Beside his official charge, rumour attributes to him a secret mission from the Russian party, which had sworn the extermination of the very name of Poland, and which certainly no one was better qualified to accomplish. It was his custom, on all occasions, to say in the council—Lubecki alone daring to oppose him—“*that the Poles were born Jacobins—that revolution flowed in their veins, and was imbibed with their mother’s milk;*” stigmatizing, by these phrases, their innate patriotism, and hatred of Muscovite rule. Drunken in his habits, openly atheistical by conviction, a rogue, like every other Russian proconsul, and remarkable for dissolute morals; he was, nevertheless, constituted guardian of the Polish youth, and the apostle of bigotry. By his advice, the higher

clergy were rendered rich and oppressive; the inferior orders were reduced to poverty and indolence; and instruction, moral and religious, was withheld from the people. Official spies, styled inspectors, were introduced to the lectures in the universities and high schools, to note the opinions of the teachers and students; and able professors were, in consequence, removed, to make way for the tools of government. Amongst the students, abilities, application, and good conduct, did but mark them for ruin and persecution; and, *horresco referens*, licensed dissipation was even held out to them as a reward. If the youths passed unharmed through these infernal snares, they owed it to their jacobinism; that is to say, to their innate hatred of Muscovite dominion.

Conscious of his guilt, but defying public opinion, Constantine established the most perfect system of secret police that ever existed, for denouncing not only every spoken word, but even unuttered thoughts and feelings. The Belvedere Palace, fitted for his residence at the expense of the citizens, was the head quarters of this police, from whence it extended throughout, and even beyond, the kingdom. It was divided into two branches, exterior and interior. The first of these consisted again of two departments; one of which, directed by the Polish general Rozniecki, took cognizance of the countries immediately adjacent to the kingdom; and the reports forwarded to Warsaw by his agents in Prussia, contained details as accu-

rate, of the military stations, fortresses, garrisons, &c., and other resources of each of its provinces, as if that country had belonged to Russia. Amongst the papers afterwards found in the Belvedere, was the plan for an invasion of Galicia and Hungary. The other department, under the control of Colonel Fenshawe, an Englishman by birth, extended to Germany, Italy, France, and England. The reports transmitted from those countries, contained curious illustrations of their respective governments, their public characters, the hopes and wishes of their subjects, and, in many instances, of their military force and resources. Let not this warning be disregarded at the present moment, when Russian writers and Russian spies, both male and female, are carrying on their intrigues in all the capitals of Europe.

The police of the interior was under the special direction of Constantine himself, aided by the municipality of Warsaw and the post-office. To penetrate the privacy of domestic life, all families were compelled to hire their servants at an office established for the purpose at the municipality. In this seminary of spies, even old and faithful servants were bribed or terrified into betraying their employers, and thus all social confidence and comfort were destroyed. Conversation was carried on in foreign languages, to diminish the risk of denunciation by menials ; and to avoid suspicion when an entertainment was given, it became customary to

invite a commissioner of the police to join the party. Not only were public assemblies, public walks, the theatres, and private conversations, watched by police agents, but the very looks and gestures of individuals. Cemeteries, the tombs of patriots, state prisons, became so many tests for loyalty; and the mournful look, or unbidden tear of the passers by, was construed into high treason, and punished accordingly. Every honest man was marked; the esteem of his fellow citizens being an influence dangerous to government. Some, for speaking in public were denounced as agitators; others, for remaining silent, as secret plotters of mischief. In thousands of instances, the only alternative was to serve the tyrant's hateful ends, or to trust only in Providence. To such a degree did Constantine carry persecution, that even birds, taught to sing the national melodies, were taken from their owners and killed.

Individuals often disappeared, no one knew how; and the whispered lamentations of a mother or a wife alone bore witness to her loss. Many such victims lingered for years in prison, without being told the cause of their captivity; and, if at length set free, it was usually under an extorted oath, never to divulge the secrets of the dungeon. The cries of persons under torture were heard by night in the Belvedere; and it was rumoured that Constantine himself was the torturer; a statement confirmed by the death-bed confession of the late Warsaw executioner, as to

the nocturnal executions which he had been compelled to inflict. The food usually administered to the prisoners, was salted herrings, without drink of any kind ; but even this exquisite torment was, in one instance at least, surpassed. A Pole, named Adam Cichowski, disappeared from his home under circumstances of more than usual mystery, and was supposed to have been drowned in the Vistula, on the banks of which his clothes had been found. Seven years afterwards, on the outbreak of the insurrection of 1830, he was discovered in prison. He related subsequently, that two Cossacks had been employed to stare alternately at him, without intermission, until the diabolical invention sickened him to madness. For months after his return to his family, he was unable to recognize either wife or children, making no other reply to their questions, than, " Let me be at peace ! I know nothing !"

No distinction of classes was observed, nor any difference made, between foreigners and natives ; Constantine acknowledged only that of master and slaves. On arriving at Warsaw, foreigners were forced either to enter the army, as was the case with several Germans, and even some Russians, or were immediately sent away. By some papers, since found in the Belvedere, it was ascertained that several foreigners were condemned to be branded with marks of infamy : whether the punishment was really inflicted remains unknown. Constantine persecuted even abroad those who had opportunities of acquir-



ing information in Poland. A German\*, who had served in the Russian army at Warsaw, and afterwards wrote on Russia, disappeared from Dresden, leaving no trace behind; a circumstance the more remarkable, as the Saxons boasted that their police was so vigilant, that not even a nightcap could be stolen without detection.

The following anecdote may be useful to editors of public journals. The French *Constitutionnel* reported, that on the day of the coronation of Nicholas, Constantine had mingled with the populace of Warsaw like a policeman. Greatly incensed, he despatched Fenshawe, his chamberlain, to bring the bold editor to Warsaw; but, on reaching Berlin, Fenshawe found the object of his mission stated in the *Constitutionnel* itself, and he consequently returned disappointed of his victim. But volumes would scarcely suffice to relate all the singularities of this remarkable tyrant. He had, besides, in the Belvedere, a cabinet noir, or perlustration office, as it was called, for the examination of all letters, both native and foreign, and copies of the more important amongst them were usually deposited in the palace. Not even the correspondence of ministers with the court of St. Petersburg, nor that of the Prussian and Austrian consuls at Warsaw, was exempted from

\* Lieutenant Märtens of Hanover, who published a work under the fictitious name, "Russland in der neusten Zeit von E. Pabel."—1829.



this investigation, who thus felt compelled to send, not only their despatches, but their private letters, by express. The only exception was in favour of Princess Lowicka's letters, as Constantine read them beforehand. Colonel Sass, who was assassinated in the insurrection, had, during his residence of several years in England, invented means of opening letters and resealing them, without leaving any trace of the operation. More remarkable than all, the imperial family themselves were surrounded by the same halo of treachery. That very Colonel Sass was the Czar's spy over his brother; who, in his turn, had agents to report to him every word uttered within the court of St. Petersburg. A curious account was found at the Belvedere, of a visit made by Nicholas to Berlin, detailing the most trifling actions of the then Czarewitch and his consort. The extent of this canker may be inferred from the following abominable oath, usually taken by the spies, and which was adapted both to the Roman Catholic and Greek creeds:—" I  
" swear by God Almighty, Unity in Holy Trinity, by  
" the Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, by all the  
" Saints, and by my patron Saint in particular, that  
" I will most zealously exert myself in fulfilling the  
" duty I am entrusted with by the Government, and  
" most faithfully attend to all the articles of in-  
" struction" (here the instructions are read to them)  
" which have been communicated to me; and that  
" I will not divulge anything connected with the

“ office I have undertaken, to any person whomso-  
 “ ever ; neither to my relatives, nor to the members  
 “ of the other departments of the police, nor to any  
 “ of their chiefs. I solemnly promise to exercise  
 “ my office without any distinction of persons, not  
 “ excepting my nearest relatives.” The oath ended,  
 “ So help me God, Unity in Holy Trinity, and all  
 “ the Saints, to fulfil faithfully this oath \*.”

The object thus impiously veiled under a pretended solicitude for the public welfare, was merely to establish an unparalleled despotism upon universal mistrust. *Divide et impera*. Vile agents, preying upon the nation, were loaded with honourable decorations, and even Christian orders were bestowed on Jews. Speaking of the return to office of these wretches, the Prussian *State Gazette* (February 1, 1832) thus expressed itself :—“ We  
 “ need but mention the names of the functionaries  
 “ whom the Emperor Nicholas has in his magnanimity appointed, whose personal characters were  
 “ the pledge of their future conduct,” &c. Yet, after these words of bitter irony, the editor still refrained from publishing their names. He had, also, asserted that the seizure of Polish children and young females commanded by Nicholas, was the result of the purest benevolence (*die reinste Menschenliebe*). One crime leads to another, and the ministerial

\* Russisches Schreckens und Verfolgungs-System, dargestellt aus officiellen Quellen Von Michael Hube Polnischen Staats-Referendare.—Paris, 1832.

journal of Berlin, by that apology, probably sought to excuse the introduction of the same system into Prussia and the German States.

The decision of Constantine, the daily violator of the Charter, the absolute ruler of the kingdom, and the presumptive heir of the imperial throne, to accept the mission of national representative at the Diet, in preference to the senatorial dignity to which his rank entitled him, is another striking trait in the character of this singular man. The inhabitants of Praga, hoping to be indemnified for the calamities of war which had pressed upon them ever since the time of Suwaroff, elected him their deputy, with the view of furthering their claims at the Diet; and he accepted the charge, having previously consulted Alexander, who reaped therefrom fresh harvests of panegyrics from the liberals of Europe. Constantine spoke only once in the Diet, and in the French language, on the occasion of his presenting a petition from his constituents, which, of course, was successful. His presence there was rather a subject of curiosity than of any other feeling. The populace, who filled the avenues of the palace, usually fled, horror-struck, at his approach, and returned, with bursts of laughter, after he had retired. His favourite occupation was to marshal the sentinels round the Diet-hall; and so anxious was he not to forfeit his pretensions to infallibility, by mistaking his seat, that, regardless of the most important discussion, he

would, before he sat down, count on his fingers all the members who had preceded and followed him.

It is not alone by political, moral, and intellectual slavery, that a nation may be undone ; by the abstraction of private and public property it may be also reduced to the servitude of pauperism. The Czars, having made such rapid progress in transforming the kingdom into an integral province of their empire, now prepared to consummate their designs on its financial and economical relations. At the head of this department was Prince Xavier Lubecki, a Lithuanian nobleman, and the personal enemy of Novosilzoff. He had originally entered the Russian army, but, disgusted with military service, he quitted it for the civil, and was made governor of Vilno, and after the retreat of the French, in 1813, a member of the provisional government of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. On the installation of the kingdom, he was sent to Vienna and Berlin, for the purpose of liquidating the claims of the Polish subjects of those respective governments ; and, consequently, not only were individuals defrauded of their claims, but, in compliance with the injunction of the Russian chancellor (Nesselrode), he applied the capital which should have enriched the Polish treasury, to indemnify Prussia for her services to Russia during the late war with Napoleon. On entering upon his office, therefore, in 1821, he had the advantage over the other ministers, of having zealously served Russia, and only

Russia. Notwithstanding much disorder in the financial department, it was not bankrupt, as Alexander had asserted; and Lubecki, after considering with his usual coolness and discernment the exigencies of the country, and its resources, exclaimed, with much self-complacency, "The machine shall work!" Under his direction affairs soon assumed a different aspect. Active, eloquent, with the experience resulting from the study of men rather than of books—a true Russian minister—so impenetrable in his caution, that he used to say of himself, in his eccentric manner, "he would burn his shirt, if it knew the secrets of his mind," he rapidly supplanted Novosilzoff in the imperial favour, and, monopolizing the influence of his colleagues, ruled Poland like a Turkish pacha. Perfecting the centralization of power, and the official hierarchy, he widened the interval between the government and the people, till the former became, for the first time, everything, and the latter nothing. By his instrumentality, the mania for office, and the supremacy of mercenary service over civic merit, took deep root in the once generous soil of Poland.

At the very outset of his administration, Lubecki had recourse to unusual measures, inventing new taxes and reviving many that had been discontinued and forgotten for ten years, in order to make up the deficit which threatened the political existence of the kingdom. Little as that existence was really worth, the Poles would have yielded all, to disprove the

assertion that their own resources were inadequate to its necessities. Had Lubecki, after supplying this deficit, endeavoured to establish a just balance between the revenue and the expenditure, he would have been entitled to the nation's thanks; but far from so doing, he persevered in endeavouring to increase the former by violent measures, introducing monopolies of every article of food and drink, which he farmed out to a Russian Jew; and, finally, established a fiscal tyranny, so intolerable, that even Constantine, who had an appanage on the principality of Lovicz, remonstrated. The wary minister, however, silenced his protest, by bribing him with funds for the maintenance of the police, and for the erection of more state prisons.

His system of finance was to supply ready money, without regard to the justice or injustice of the means employed. The brewers of Warsaw were entitled, by a privilege formerly conferred on them by their monarchs, and since not only respected both by the Austrian and Prussian governments, but guaranteed by the law, to make and sell both beer and brandy. Under the pretext that this was of *juris regalis*, as in Russia, he deprived them of their right, and rendered it a government monopoly. The brewers, secure in the lawfulness of their claim, brought an action against the minister, which ended in the lawyers, who had dared to defend their case, being struck off the lists, and in the condemnation of one citizen to sweep the square of Saxony, chained

to a wheelbarrow. Spirits were in consequence smuggled into Warsaw, and many street murders committed in the contests between the contraband and fiscal agents. For the trial of the illegal dealers, Lubecki, on his own authority, established a court, and the fines imposed being absurdly heavy, many aged persons, who were unable to pay, were condemned to fifty or sixty years imprisonment, and much misery and disgrace entailed on families previously prosperous.

He was indefatigable in devising modes of ruin. There were many estates charged with pious legacies, the occupants paying an annual sum towards the support of public institutions. These sacred funds he seized for the benefit of the treasury. With a view to the preservation of certain national domains, which from the custom of short leases had become dilapidated, as also to increase the comfort of the peasantry, who suffered greatly by the frequent change of landlords, the Diet proposed to make the tenure of these estates perpetual ; but Lubecki, whose object was to bring them to auction, opposed the project, and, as usual, being backed by the Czar, with success. A plausible excuse for these sales, however, being still wanted, he bethought himself of encumbering the lands with debt. For this purpose he established a Company of Land Credit, having a capital of public landed property, and then opened a government bank, which, by lending large



sums in paper at a low interest, in a few years entailed a load of obligations on private and public lands. He then professed to see no alternative but that of selling those which belonged to the nation, and thus inflicted a deadly blow on its property.

Banks, and other analogous institutions, may be beneficial to the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial interests of independent states, but are fraught with danger to a country under a foreign yoke. An independent people may put all their property into circulation without peril, but a nation which has to recover its political existence by force of arms, should give all possible stability to every kind of property until the moment for insurrection arrives. In this lies its hope of success; and the future independence of Poland was not risked so long as Russia could not, if she would, take anything from it. This was the case until Lubecki, by his land credit operations, crippling with debt, and then selling the national domains, and involving both public and private property, finally placed all that the Poles possessed at the Czar's discretion, by an affiliation of the Warsaw bank with that of St. Petersburg.

He did not yet expend all, but commenced by lending forty-two millions of florins to Russia, lodging forty more in the bank of St. Petersburg, and six in that of Berlin, besides lavishing immense sums on objects of extravagant luxury; thus finally



maturing the financial part of his plan for transforming the kingdom into an integral province of Russia.

By the public at large finance is as little comprehended as metaphysics ; and although Lubecki had dissipated the foreign capital of Poland, and impoverished the country internally, he yet had admirers, and sincere ones, amongst the Poles themselves. " What a pattern minister," exclaimed the officers, who were growing rich under his patronage : " he " is all powerful at St. Petersburg," said others : and truly the Czars were so well satisfied with him, that they would gladly have had as able a financier in Russia, to empower them the better to prosecute their aggressive wars. " What an incomparable " head has this minister," again thought others, and believed that he was deceiving Russia in favour of the kingdom, forgetting that the anti-constitutional measures by which for a time he protracted its existence, were ruinous to it, and beneficial to Russia alone. The few, who perceived the true state of affairs, were deterred from explanation by the fate of the Warsaw brewers. One intrepid censurer of the system, however, arose in the state council, in the person of Novosilzoff. He denounced the Land Credit Company and the bank as illegal, having been established without the sanction of the Diet, and predicted fatal results from the sale of the national property. But this opposition only furthered Lubecki's plans, and increased his popularity, for

no one could believe that any measure disapproved by Novosilzoff, could be injurious to the country ; for they were not aware that he opposed the sale of the domains, only because he hoped to reap a harvest from them in case they should remain in their actual condition. Still Lubecki was by Russia and Prussia styled the author of material prosperity to the Poles, whom they reproached with ingratitude. This material prosperity, had such existed, which it did not, would have been a legacy of national slavery, and it should be observed that no merely physical well being will ever make the Poles forget that they were once a powerful and independent people. The reproach of ingratitude too, was at least illogical, in attributing to the Russians any good which the Poles might themselves have effected ; since the institutions of the kingdom were Polish, and not Russian, and according to the constitution it governed itself. The king could only be the agent of the people's will. But the boasted prosperity was a glittering illusion, which vanished into nothing on a nearer view.

More effectually to sever the constitutional kingdom from the provinces and the rest of Europe, three lines of Cossacks were stationed along the frontier. The importation of Prussian goods being thus interrupted, Prussia augmented the duty on Polish grain sent to Dantzic ; and Alexander, availing himself of this as a pretext for breaking off all commercial intercourse between the nations, com-

manded a canal to be cut (which cost the nation several millions yearly), uniting the Vistula and Niemen, in order to convey the grain by water to Riga. Had this extravagant project been carried into effect, it would only have facilitated the transport of Russian armaments against Poland and the rest of Europe, for every enterprise undertaken by the Czars in Poland, is always with this twofold object. The kingdom thus isolated, the government was obliged to establish home manufactories, the monopoly of which fell exclusively into the hands of German colonists. Without competition in the markets, and aided by large sums advanced by government, articles of inferior quality were offered at an extravagant price, which the Poles were compelled to pay ; and hence German artisans, who in their own country scarcely earned a subsistence by sixteen hours daily labour, with half the toil acquired riches in Poland, and soon flocked there, to the number of 30,000. The inevitable results were, that the Poles, instead of purchasing good articles at a low rate abroad, were obliged to buy the worst and dearest at home, and that the advantage which Germany ought to have derived from commercial intercourse with a neighbouring country, was transferred to the hands of a company of fortune hunters. The kingdom was thus deprived of the benefit of large capitals, which were invested elsewhere ; and although Polish cloth was exported to Muscovy and China, it did not enrich the country. The establish-

ment of manufactures in the kingdom, in its actual state, might be compared to constructing the roof of a house before its foundations should be laid. Only such hands should be there employed in them as are not required for agriculture, and even in former times, when the native population was more numerous, it was inadequate to the full cultivation of the soil, and, consequently, is still more so now that it has been diminished by so many wars. The constitutional kingdom, for instance, could support a population three times its actual number, and twice as many hands were requisite for its full cultivation. Nothing, therefore, could exceed the absurdity of making the Poles emulate manufactures already brought to a high degree of perfection in other countries, and at the same time neglect the agricultural pursuits in which they excelled all others. The sole effect of these manufactories was to ruin agriculture, of which Mr. Jacob, who was sent into Poland by the English government on an agricultural mission, has given a melancholy picture.

The country around Cracow may be compared to England; abounding in silver, copper, zinc, iron, and extensive coal and salt mines. Poland may still be called the granary of Europe. The timber, flax, and hemp of Lithuania, are the best and cheapest. Podolia and Ukraina abound in the finest cattle, and a magnificent breed of chargers. Numerous rivers, of the first, second, and third magnitudes, afford natural facilities of internal communication ;

and the Baltic and Black Seas enable her to trade with foreign countries. These natural communications are so interwoven with each other, that no province can be severed from ancient Poland without detriment to the remainder ; and it might have been the knowledge of this fact that induced the Congress of Vienna to guarantee absolute freedom of commerce to all Poles. And now that all the provinces are separated by impassable barriers, what can be said of the physical well being of the country in general, and more particularly of that portion nicknamed the Constitutional Kingdom, isolated as it is from the adjacent countries, and especially from Dantzic. Unless Russia should succeed in converting this part of Poland wholly into a desert, she must either restore it (which she will never do but by compulsion), or take possession also of Dantzic and the Polo-Prussian provinces.

The Russians boast of having embellished Warsaw. It is certainly true that some public edifices have been constructed, under the immediate direction of government, though at the expense of the citizens exclusively ; but the Asiatic Chinese style of these new buildings, is ill-assorted to the classic architecture of Warsaw. The Russians usually adorn the capital of the countries they subjugate, as if in token that they never mean to abandon their prey.

## CHAPTER II.

### *National Conservatism—Secret Societies—National Education—Prince Adam Czartoryski.*

THE destructive system, so universally pursued in the kingdom, by the erection of which the Congress of Vienna offended the interests of Russia, was essential to the conservation of the autocratic empire of the Czars. The existence of the constitutional kingdom in the vicinity of the sister countries, was an obstacle to their incorporation with the Russian dominions, and contributed to preserve the national character still more distinct, since every patriotic scene occurring on the Vistula found sympathy beyond the Bug, and each word whispered in Warsaw was heard at Vilno. The kingdom, forming an excrescence of the empire, was like a sponge, which absorbed everything from Western Europe, and then emptied it into the interior of the colossus. Poland of the Vistula therefore, the land lacerated by the bullets of so many insurrections, and surrounded by a revolutionary atmosphere, haunted the Czars like a spectre, threatening the dissolution of their empire. To such thoughts, influencing, though they could not justify their conduct, may be added

the jealousy of their native subjects, who regarded it as a personal affront that the less powerful Poles, after all their calamities, should enjoy rights and privileges withheld from themselves. Constantine's marriage, too, was another source of evil. Having renounced the greatest throne in the world for a Polish wife, he thought that he was, in consequence, entitled to exert absolute rule over fifteen millions of her countrymen. This abdication was acknowledged by Alexander to be essential to the existence of autocracy, and thenceforth the history of Russian Poland was only that of a cabal for reform in the imperial succession. On the other hand, had the constitution been observed, a liberal administration, a free press, and unintimidated Diets, could not have failed to awaken, in even a still shorter period than tyranny required to do it, the national desire of independence. So reasoned the cabinet of St. Petersburg. But if, as Novosilzoff said, it was dangerous to grant the Poles a moment's breathing time in their sufferings, or leave them even a shadow of liberty, because they would avail themselves of it to regain their freedom, it was no less certain that every injury inflicted, every privilege torn away, would but excite them to more determined struggles against the stranger's yoke. Thus, after the partition of their country, liberty or oppression, a mild or tyrannic government must ever produce the same result,—a contest for lost but still merited independence. Such is the unalterable



condition of their existence under foreign rule—if it be mild, they rise because they can—if tyrannical, because they must. They can never be reconciled to subjection, either by moderation or tyranny. It is this necessity for incessant oppression on the one side, and for constant resistance on the other ; this fatality, which lies heavy alike on the Poles and on their foreign rulers ; which gives that high tragic character to all their insurrections, and renders their history so interesting and instructive.

The open rising of an independent people against a national government that has become oppressive, is termed a revolution. The Poles, no longer independent, were obliged first to conspire in secret, until such a number of individuals should be collected as would suffice to rouse the whole nation against their foreign masters. This is called an insurrection. The first secret associations in Poland were synchronous with the first intrigues of Russia ; and the first insurrection that resulted from them was the confederation of Bar, headed by Casimir Pulawski. Next came the first partition, after which the national Diet voted the celebrated constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791 ; but the sudden annihilation of their political existence prevented them from carrying into effect that great measure of reform. Hence the third partition was the murder of a living nation, nerved and strengthened by exalted ideas, which it was on the eve of realizing. Thus the territory alone was dismembered ; the individuality



of the nation remained entire. The two above-named events were great efforts, the one armed, the other legislative—two great results of national thought, when Poland, losing her station amongst the European powers, retained her firm resolve to regain it at some future time. This legacy of the country, at the moment of her political death, is the clue to the phenomena of extraordinary activity displayed by the Poles after their fall. Ejected by violence from the community of European states, Poland developed within herself, a mode of existence unknown till then in the history of the world—a *domestic national vitality*; all the strength by which she had once swayed widely in the North, was, after the partition, concentrated within the circle of family life. This fact may be thus explained. Under the Piasts she was an absolute power. Under the Jagellons a free, constitutional, and well-ordered monarchy, powerful both at home and abroad. She next became a republic, with an elective king, full of internal though anarchical life; but weak in her external relations, and losing thereby a part of her importance with other powers, she became obnoxious to partition. But that very weakness of her government having prevented the dissipation of her strength in wars of ambition, she still retained sufficient force to rise repeatedly after the dismemberment had taken place. In short, the accident that Poland was an anarchical republic during the two last centuries, that she had not a despotic government, but was a free nation; in other

words, that she was more of a family than a state, preserved to the subsequent generations a powerful force that will resist many centuries of oppression. This result does not justify, but it explains, the effects of the anarchical republic. Family, home, constitute at once the secret of Polish insurrections. The family existence, strong on the eve of political death, is the sinew of these insurrections. Such is the nature of Poland, that she struggles with all the energy of her social internal life for political independence, and, in this respect, has greatly the advantage over the three powers that dismembered her. A single defeat (at Jena) destroyed the whole work of Frederick the Great, and in less than fifteen days Prussia no longer an independent power, was indebted solely to the bright eyes of her queen for the preservation of her political existence. Such empires as Prussia, Austria, and Russia, may be termed unnatural—the creations of violence, not having the principle of stability within themselves. Make, for instance, a republic of Russia, and give free constitutions to Prussia and Austria, and the various nations of which they now consist would separate into so many independent states. Which of these powers could subsist, as Poland has, for sixty years, without a central government, without fortresses, armies, or funds, and oppressed by the tyranny of a triple foreign yoke?

The history of Poland, since the partition, may be considered under the double aspect of public and

private ; the one, a record of the nation's slavery, with her enslavers ; the other, a narrative of national efforts to shake off their chains. The former contains as many chapters as the portions into which she was divided ; the latter, is one and the same for the whole country.

Secret societies, the source of all insurrections, are its principal features ; but secrecy being their characteristic, the information respecting them is necessarily scanty. By their means the insurrection under Kosciuszko was brought about. A few Poles, scattered in foreign lands, maintained secret intercourse with those in their own, and returning suddenly with that patriot at their head, without an army, and without funds, they yet declared war against Russia and Prussia, and for a year defeated the armies of those powerful states. There is nothing so great in the world's history, with which this insurrection may not vie. Many patriots emigrated at its close, and whilst they wandered beyond unknown seas, as says the Archbishop Woronicz, maintained the unconquerable will in the hearts of those who were in chains at home. The Pole emigrates in the name of his country : his mission is not to seek fortune, but to proclaim his country's wrongs, and then return to avenge them. A band of Polish emigrants is not a faction chased by an opposing faction, but the remnant of the nation protesting against foreign tyranny. The existence of the Poles, since the partition, is, to a certain

extent, easily systematized. They resolve to rise, and having failed, they emigrate; but only to conspire again, again to fight, and emigrate again. Secret societies, insurrections, exile, are the three for ever recurring stanzas of the same melancholy lay. Each has its peculiar characteristic; *viz.*, secret associations—sacred, sworn fidelity; insurrections—enthusiasm and valour; exile—resignation. Thus the love of fatherland assumes amongst the Poles something fantastic and religious.

Secret societies commenced in 1819, when the first violation of the Constitution took place. They kept pace with the progress of public affairs until the insurrection of 1830, which was their result. The Poles delight to find something poetical in their patriotic enterprises. A tradition transmitted from society to society, named Dombrowski, the commander of the Polish legions in Italy, as their first institutor. Words, said to have been uttered by him on his death bed, sank so deeply in some patriotic breasts, that they were recorded as a dying behest, which the nation subsequently rose to execute on the field of battle. If this were but the invention of some patriot, it must be acknowledged, that a fiction, tracing to the dying words of an old warrior, the origin of an armed insurrection, was eminently poetic.

Major Lukasinski, of the fourth of the line, established the first association in the kingdom, applying the rules of a masonic society (still permitted in 1819)

to the national free masonry, exclusively suited to Poland. It consisted of four orders, or classes. Members of the first class were bound to support military men who had suffered in the late campaigns: those of the two next were employed in enlightening their countrymen, and spreading the spirit of nationality. By the fourth class, the national independence, resulting from the exertions of the other three, was openly discussed. The symbol of ordinary masonry, the reconstruction of Solomon's temple, is typical of the restoration of the depraved moral nature of man. This regenerative christian principle was applied by Lukasinski to Poland, as requiring to be reconstructed and restored. The other symbols were of easy application. The death of the innocent Hiram represented the partition, and his three murderers the three partitioning powers. The Poles were the children of Hiram, bound unremittingly to pursue and combat the usurpers of his throne. Finally, the belief in his resuscitation, amidst the greatest difficulties, was transferred to the hoped-for restoration of Poland.

This national free masonry spread rapidly in the army, the kingdom, and the grand duchy of Posen, and existed, thus disguised, until 1821, when an order of Alexander, abolishing all associations, caused it to disappear nominally, but not in fact. From the elements of this national masonry, Lukasinski established a great patriotic secret society, sub-divided into commons, respectively

limited to ten members, and several of these commons formed a district; and a certain number of districts constituted a province. Seven provinces comprehended the whole of ancient Poland; each province having a president, who formed one of the central committee, which had its seat in Warsaw. This committee, unknown to its subordinates, superintended the whole fabric. Thus the government might cut off a branch, without uprooting the tree. It was also empowered to send emissaries through the country, and incorporate and communicate with new societies. Acting on the principle that an unseen power is always magnified by men's imaginations, in the ratio of its mystery, its influence was great. The national free masonry, so sagaciously conceived by Lukasinski, gave, notwithstanding its short duration, a powerful impulse to the country, and, in the space of a few months, secret societies were every where established. Illustrious names, wealth, talents, all were enlisted by a few patriots, anxious to restore their country by means of its own resources. Many noble families in Podolia and Ukraina, prepared for an armament according to their ancient usage. They procured arms and buried them in the earth, forged lances, and gradually increased the numbers of their servants and horses, whilst the oriental luxury of their usual habits enabled them to pursue their preparations without exciting suspicion. Even beyond the sphere of the great central society, and without

its knowledge, others, animated by the same spirit, started into existence ; and it often occurred, that two distinct societies formed in the capital, met far from their original source. The agency of the central committee was even better organised than Constantine's police ; and no sooner traced a newly formed society, than they incorporated it with the great one. It often happened, that the same individuals were members of several, without betraying the secret ; which may be accounted for partly by the reserve of the Poles, and partly to their abhorrence of the foreign dominion.

Amongst many others, was the society of the Templars, established by Captain Maiewski, who, during his captivity, had been a member of the Templars' lodge in Scotland. Its object was the same as that of the national masonry, with this difference only ; that women were admitted, in order to extend its influence over the whole social frame of national life. It soon came into communication with the patriotic society, but still preserved its independence.

A still more powerful engine of national conservatism, was public education ; the two principal foci of which, were at Warsaw and Vilno.

Prince Adam Czartoryski was eminently serviceable in this department. His family (a branch of the Jagellon dynasty), are celebrated for their efforts to establish a vigorous administration, during the reign of Stanislaus Poniatski ; but were baffled



in the attempt, by the blind opposition of the democratic nobility, influenced by Russian intrigue. They were the chief promoters of the Constitution of the 3rd of May, and its champion, Kosciuszko, was educated in a military school established by them. Prince Adam served as Major under him, and emigrated after his catastrophe. The Empress Catherine then threatened to confiscate the immense family estates, unless the young Princes, Adam and Constantine, were sent as hostages to St. Petersburg. On their arrival there, they were treated with particular distinction, and admitted as companions of the young Czarewitch Alexander, and his brother Constantine. Prince Adam, perceiving in Alexander some indications of a generous disposition, resolved, if possible, to implant upon it the kindred sentiments which he himself had learnt from Burke and Fox ; trusting that the young monarch, if once taught to act on just and humane principles towards his own subjects, might also be led to acknowledge and redress the wrongs of the Poles. His success at first surpassed his hopes, Alexander becoming so enamoured of liberal ideas, as at one time to propose their escaping together to the United States, there to enjoy the benefit of republican citizenship.

Madame de Staël called Alexander *an exception*, an epithet which has no meaning, as applied to him ; Czars being ever more perfect in their sort, as they approach nearer the Tatar stock, their



type being, not Marcus Aurelius, but Ivan the cruel. For a moment, indeed, Alexander seemed to be of a mixed character : but he ended by equalling, if not exceeding, the most genuine of former Czars. The transient tinge of liberalism that marked a portion of his reign, was the result of his friendship with Prince Czartoryski ; and the very fact that a Czar, by coming in contact with a Pole, should be adopted a son of civilization, and be considered *an exception*, is yet another tribute to Polish merit. Whilst his countrymen were shedding their blood for France, Czartoryski made the best of his singular position in behalf of his country ; and, towards the beginning of 1804, when the chancellor Woronzoff resigned the office of minister for foreign affairs, he consented to be his successor, on condition of being permitted to resign, whenever Russian policy should become hostile to the interests of Poland. At that period, Russia was at peace, and in close alliance with France ; a circumstance which, owing to the Polish legions having also remained there, was erroneously attributed to the Prince by the Russian aristocracy, who still remembered with indignation the disgrace cast upon them by Suwaroff's unsuccessful campaign. Their suspicion rather assisted Prince Czartoryski's views, for he was, in fact, desirous of an alliance with England, partly from respect for her institutions, but still more from the apprehension of mischief to Poland in case of a protracted

peace between Russia and France. He then saw enough to convince him, that just in proportion as the power of Napoleon increased, did Alexander grow liberal to the Poles, whose co-operation with France it was his wish at least to neutralize. Thus, what some attributed to the generosity of Alexander, did, in fact, result from selfish calculation; and it is the province of history to explain the policy of cabinets by interest, and not by sentiment. At this day, the same effect would follow any pressure from the West; and were France still equally prompt to draw the sword, even Nicholas would become generous to the Poles. It was, therefore, with secret satisfaction that the Prince, in 1805, signed a treaty of alliance between Russia, Great Britain, and Austria, against Napoleon; and his hopes were justified by the friendly disposition soon evinced by the Russian cabinet towards his countrymen. Anxious to profit by the indecision of the King of Prussia, Alexander urged Prince Joseph Poniatowski, then in Warsaw, to insurrectionize the Polish subjects of the former, and proclaim him king of Poland. The proposal was listened to, and would have been carried into effect, had not the Muscovite party (the opponents of Czartoryski) brought Prussia over to the northern alliance; England was at that time so ill disposed towards Prussia, that, to enable Alexander to crush it, she offered to transfer to him the subsidies previously promised to that state.

In the meantime, Czartoryski, disgusted with the turn affairs had taken during the war against Austria, in 1805, and still more so with the Russians, by whom Alexander was surrounded, retired from office at the commencement of 1806\*. On the establishment of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw he even withdrew from his presence, and refused to enjoy the prerogatives of friendship, foreseeing in the next collision between France and Russia, and in the ascending star of Napoleon, the salvation of Poland. Thenceforth he devoted himself to his duties as Curator at the University of Vilno, a post to which he had been appointed in 1801, when public education in the Polo-Russian provinces had been reduced to the lowest ebb. This university (established in 1583, by Stephen Batory) had been, after Kosciuszko's catastrophe absolutely deserted, both

\* On accepting office, Czartoryski stipulated that neither salary, decoration, nor any kind of remuneration, should be forced upon him. All his subordinates were Poles, and to defray the costs of the office, he expended several millions of his own fortune during the short period of his ministry. In 1815 he declined accepting the Polish order of the White Eagle, sent him by Alexander, pleading his former engagement; but on the latter indignantly ordering him to accept it, he interpreted the command as the signal of his disgrace at court. Such disinterestedness is so little understood in Russia, that Nicholas, as a punishment for the part taken by Czartoryski in the late insurrection, issued an ukase (1831) declaring him unworthy to wear a Russian decoration; but on perceiving his blunder, deprived him, by another the next year, of his Polish order.

by professors and students, and five other schools of an inferior description alone remained. This aspect of things was quickly changed by Czartoryski, and one hundred and twenty-seven provincial colleges arose, supported by him and other patriots. At Krzemieniec, a college containing eight classes, and on a plan much resembling that of a university, was established by his indefatigable coadjutor, the historian Thaddeus Czacki. The university of Vilno was re-organized by the Prince himself, and a new statute drawn up, by which it was declared the highest school and the supreme board of public education for all Polono-Russian provinces. Placing distinguished men in all the chairs, he chose for rector John Sniadecki, an author well known for his astronomical labours\*, who with uncommon ardour set about introducing the system of science then prevalent in continental Europe. At the beginning of the present century, France and Germany were the two main sources of scientific knowledge; the French presiding over matter, the Germans over spirit. Scepticism carried to the extreme, yet leading to important results in politics; criticism, the material part of human knowledge, distinguished the French beyond every other continental nation; speculation, rather than practice, beguiled the Ger-

\* Sniadecki published a biography and a very able commentary on the system of his countryman Copernicus (Kopernik), which was translated into French and English.

mans beyond the regions of reality. It was the very essence of French science, to be universally applicable to all places and all people ; but German philosophy was local, peculiar to the metaphysical turn of the natives, vibrating in a state of chaos from which they are still unable to emerge. Snia-decki did not hesitate long before he decided ; and, preferring certainty to uncertainty, adopted the French system of natural science and mathematics, to the utter neglect of moral science. The students might be divided into two classes—those who meant to follow theology, law, or medicine, with professional views, and those who studied for the pure love of knowledge, or to provide themselves with an agreeable pastime in the capital. Now as scientific qualifications in Russia corresponded to military grades (fourteen in number), and the degrees of candidate (lieutenant), master (captain), or doctor (major), were conferred exclusively by the faculties of natural science, it followed that all students pursued them with the view of obtaining one of these grades, without which in Russia a man is a slave ; and that moral science was, in consequence, almost wholly abandoned. The result will be important.

It has been said that, besides its task of instruction, the superintendence of the education of twelve millions of Poles was committed to the university of Vilno, which thus became a ministerial department. All the professors were members of it *de facto*, and had the rank of colonel, the rector being counsellor

of state (general officer). The large salaries of the professors enabling them to live in ostentation ; and the circumstance that bishops and prelates formed a part of the council, secured its consideration, and converted these dispensers of literature and science into an aristocracy of learning, on whose province neither the civil nor the military authorities were permitted to infringe. Such was the university when Sniadecki, in 1816, resigned a post in which he had done good service to his country, by awakening the spirit of research, and diffusing far and wide an immense mass of knowledge. By him also and other professors the phraseology of natural science was brought to great perfection in their native language, which in precision and clearness equals, and in purity surpasses, that of France. Their own writings were models for style, and Vilno became a second focus of national literature.—Soon after Sniadecki's retirement, a society of persons, terming themselves "The Satirists," was formed in Vilno. To criticize and ridicule every abuse in government, literature, and manners, was the business of its members, and the society thus became a practical expression of the spirit of the university. The Satirists were charged with being cosmopolites, and not without reason ; for a patriotism like theirs leads as directly to indifference for the fatherland, as indifference in religion does to atheism. The students on their part also furnished ample subject for animadversion, the sons of rich families being accus-

tomed to waste their money in idle pursuits, and return home without having learned anything useful, since mathematics and physics do not suffice to form a citizen. The poorer students too, the only real seekers of knowledge still merely used it as a means of livelihood, fitting themselves to be teachers in private families, or officers under government. This tendency of the enlightened classes inevitably resulted from the system introduced by Sniadecki, which, occupying the youths exclusively with material nature, left them no time to investigate what lies beyond her limits. The laws, institutions, and politics of Europe, even the history of ancient Poland, of her constitution, diets, &c., concerned not the old man entirely absorbed in his observatory, and forgetful of all that was passing around him, even when Alexander threw off the mask of the pretended benefactor of mankind. It is also worthy of remark, that experimental science, calculations by rule and compass, systems without imagination, exclusively followed, often form the character to epicurism.

The year 1820, when so many secret societies sprung up, was also an epoch in the annals of the university of Vilno. Amongst the few penetrating minds who discerned its anti-national tendency was Thomas Zan, the son of poor but noble parents. Having attained great proficiency in physical and mathematical science, he still continued to attend the lectures, anxious to teach something beyond these to the academical youths, with two generations of whom



he had become acquainted, being himself the eldest amongst them. On the eve of any important event it would seem as if Providence raised up such men to be the originators of great social reforms. To Zan the university was not a mere resort for the promotion of physical science, the boundary beyond which nothing remained to be known. The young men of Lithuania, Samogitia, Volhynia, Podolia, and Ukraina entered their names annually by thousands as her students. Were they to be nothing more? Might nothing great be formed out of such elements? Thus thought Zan, and thus far did he succeed in realizing his thought, that so long as Lithuania shall exist, patriotism, courage, and the love of Poland will never be extinguished in that country. By the amiability of his manner, and the cultivation of his intellect, Zan secured the affection of the youths, and the confidence which he needed, in order to unite them for one great purpose. At the close of 1819 he established the Society of the Radiants. Seven rays of light was the symbol representing its seven classes; its object being to diffuse patriotism and the love of knowledge. Bartering the intellect of the poor for the possessions of the rich, he employed them all in aid of one another. If a student found himself perplexed by the prospect of an approaching examination, or unable to comprehend some lecture, gratuitous assistance was immediately offered. If another was in pecuniary difficulty, relief reached him from some



unknown hand. Every student seemed to have received new life. Each now possessed a small library of certain books hitherto unknown, and some there were who even transcribed whole volumes; one, for instance, treating of the Constitution of May 3. Casting away former frivolities, they exchanged theatrical songs for patriotic hymns. They thronged to the lectures on moral philosophy, to the astonishment of the professors, and the regret of Sniadecki, who could not understand the change. Zan, however, was the invisible reformer, assisted by the seventh class of the Radiants, called Philarettes, who, on their part, were subordinate to a supreme committee, consisting of Philomates. Thus commenced a revolution, not only in the manners and character of the students, but also in the literature of the country to which Adam Mickiewicz, one of the Radiants, added a lustre and originality never before attained.

This reform among the students happened at a most propitious moment, and prepared the way for that of the whole university. In 1821, four new professors were added to the faculty of moral sciences, amongst whom were Goluchowski, a follower of the German philosophy\*, and Lelewel, an eminent Polish historian, and incomparable as a

\* He was the author of a valuable philosophical work, which he wrote in German, and dedicated to the celebrated Von Schelling, whose pupil he had been.

professor. They were enthusiastically welcomed by the students, besides whom a large audience, both male and female, generally attended their lectures. The precedence now given to moral sciences wrought a complete alteration in the university, which, in its twofold character, collegiate and magisterial, dispensed education to twelve millions of Poles. Lelewel, in his lectures on universal history, was compelled to introduce politics. Goluchowski, in his exposition of what the Germans call philosophy, and which alone is properly so called, forced the mind to analyze itself, independently of the external world. Are not the people intent on recovering their independence bound to be both politicians and philosophers? Napoleon, in whom every instinct of despotism seemed innate, did away with political and moral sciences in the French Institute, stigmatizing them as ideology, too well aware of their power to awaken the imagination, the most potent of man's faculties, and to produce a poetic ardour, impatient of any yoke, making men delight in extreme perils. This was especially true in regard to Poland. Whatever spoke to the imagination seemed to have the enslaved country for its object, and whatever was poetical was also patriotic. Thus Zan induced the whole youthful generation in the sister countries to conspire openly against the Russian dominion simultaneously with the secret associations of the kingdom.

The Warsaw university needed no such reform,

for the students here were in the very focus of patriotism, and ready to rush into danger at the first signal. There was also at Warsaw a Royal Scientific Society (established in 1801), consisting of the most illustrious men of Poland, whose principal object was to diffuse the knowledge of Polish history, from the conviction that a subjugated nation may still protract its existence, by preserving the constant recollection of its past. Niemcewicz, its then president, the companion and friend of Kosciuszko, also took that moment to publish his "Historic Songs," metrical sketches of the principal events in the history of Poland, and of her most remarkable monarchs and heroes, with illustrative notices and engravings; and the sensation excited by this work was in itself tantamount to an important political event. Another poet, the Archbishop Woronicz, produced a national epic, the temple of Sybilla at Pulawy, so called after an edifice belonging to the Czartoryski family, where, since the partition, they had collected all the national relics in art, literature, and history. To this sacred shrine every patriot made a pilgrimage at least once in his life. There also misfortune, talent, or desert, might depend on finding an asylum or reward; useful works were printed there for the instruction of the people. This spot was celebrated by Woronicz, in that splendid poem wherein he records the deeds of his countrymen from the remotest time to the present day.

Without seeking to systematize that which might be accidental, it is yet interesting to observe that at the same time that the secret associations sprung up in the kingdom, science assumed at Vilno a character congenial to them—that the Satirists retired before the Radiants, and that Polish literature underwent a remarkable change. These simultaneous phenomena in every part of Poland explain the element of her posthumous existence—*Conspiracy!*

Such was the state of national conservatism in 1822, when the secret police became aware of Lukasinski's preparations for an insurrection, which was to commence on the departure of 100,000 Russians, who, according to rumour, would soon be marched into Italy, to suppress the Neapolitan revolution. Lukasinski, and four other officers, were arrested, and two of them committed suicide in prison, to preclude the possibility of any revelations being extorted from them. Lukasinski, and the two others, after a protracted court martial of two years, were condemned to ten years imprisonment at Zamose, on suspicion only, flogging having been employed in vain to force confession. Their constancy saved the great patriotic association, the committee of which was shortly after strengthened by Colonel Krzyzanowski, Prince Jablonowski, and the senator Soltyk. Persecution began, at the same time, at Vilno; Constantine, on visiting that city, was dissatisfied with what he saw there, and Prince Czartoryski foreseeing the danger, ordered

the Philomates to dissolve their secret committee, which was accordingly done in 1822. Novosilzoff, however, who perceived in the detection of conspiracies a source of great emolument to himself, represented to the Grand Duke that all Poland was plotting against the Czar, and that the universities were so many seminaries of Jacobinism, under the guidance and protection of Prince Czartoryski, and it was not long before an event occurred highly favourable to his views.

In May 1823, Michael Plater, only ten years of age, a pupil at the Vilno College, wrote on one of the school slates, " Long live the Constitution of May 3! Who shall restore it to us?" On being informed of this offence, Constantine despatched Novosilzoff to Vilno, where he sentenced the young Jacobin, with five of his companions, to continue their education in military colonies, and addressed letter after letter to the Grand Duke, representing the alarming state of Vilno, and the necessity of summary chastisement. Determined on discovering some plot, in December 1823 he imprisoned 1200 students in eight convents at Vilno, where he detained them six months. The usual means of torture were scourges and salted herrings, and their terror-struck parents paid enormous sums to Novosilzoff in the hope of saving their unfortunate children. He received, for instance, from Count Tyszkiewicz, 30,000 ducats, for the rescue of his son, twelve years of age. Deeply

moved by the wretched fate of his companions, Zan sacrificed himself for all, confessed that he alone had formed the society of Philaretes, and offered himself in atonement for it. His self-devotion was of no avail. An ukase was issued in September 1824, dismissing Goluchowski, Lelewel, and three other professors of moral faculty, and condemning eleven Philomates and nine Philaretes to exile for life, in Siberia or Caucasus, for having, as it stated, “ had the unreasonable desire of promoting Polish nationality.” Novosilzoff was rewarded by the curatorship of the university, and in a report, forwarded by him to St. Petersburg, he accused Czartoryski of having “ *retardé de cent ans l’amalgame de la Pologne avec la Russie.*” The Poles themselves could have bestowed no higher praise; and Alexander, in furnishing him with the opportunity of acquiring such merit, committed “ *une grande faute d’état,*” though honourable to himself, in so far as it was the result of his friendship for the prince.—That the students should be persecuted by Russia, for patriotic opinions, was natural; but that the curator should convert their virtue and their sufferings into a source of sordid gain to himself, seemed indeed an anomaly. He ruled Lithuania like a Verres, *sui profusus, alieni rapax*. He was constantly inventing new reports of conspiracies, in order to obtain bribes from the parents of his victims; he depraved their youthful minds by obscenities

not to be named, and sold the professorships to gamblers and fortune hunters, wholly isolating the province from the rest of Europe. The latent hatred of the rising generation, enlightened by Czartoryski, Sniadecki, Zan, and Lelewel, prepared a merited retribution for their oppressor.

As if the penalty he had inflicted on children for imputed guilt, were not sufficient, Alexander aimed a blow at even unborn generations, by an ukase, excluding all who were not of noble birth from the university and other colleges. Czars alone may be able to explain how this ukase could be reconciled with another, conferring nobility on those who should follow up a course of study in the university. To render it still more effective, Nicholas, in 1828, ordered all nobles to prove the legitimacy of their rank. During the wars, catastrophes and exiles, so frequent latterly in Poland, many a nobleman had lost his diploma of the rank which rendered them masters of themselves, or freemen. The object of this ukase was to reduce thousands to the station of peasants, serfs, or rather slaves, liable to military conscription, or the periodical transportation of the population, and tending to get rid of the nobles, the natural protectors of the peasants, to replace them by Russians, less dreaded by the Czar. It served, also, to increase the revenue, by the capitation-tax, to be paid by those it would render rateable as serfs, and was a source of great profit to the heraldic committee.



instituted in St. Petersburg, for the purpose of deciding upon the authenticity of documents. The illustrious family of Tyszkiewicz, for example, were pronounced to be peasants, and only recovered their rank by the payment of 100,000 gold ducats. The consequence of this measure was, that most of the rich nobles were ruined, and the poor became serfs. The wholesale transportation of the nobility, now carried on by Nicholas, commenced at that epoch, and reduced not less than half a million of the bravest nation in the world to despair. The other classes, too, were equally, or even more incensed, by the Russian administration, which would have even stirred up negroes. Legalized injustice, hierarchical robbery, and authorised venality, constitute the character of the Russian government in the Polish provinces. Its principle is, that all officials, from the highest dignitary to the lowest attendant, steal; and they do so in the utmost rigour of the term. They are compelled to steal, since the existence of the government depends upon it. That by which Russia supports her existence, and has become a European power, is hers neither by conquest nor inheritance; and whatever is not obtained by one of these means, politically considered, is robbery. What treasure could suffice to pay the salaries of all the officials who swarm from the Black Sea to Moscow, thence to St. Petersburg, and on to the United States of America? Such an administration must maintain itself, like an army in an



enemy's country, for it is beyond the power of finance to devise other means. The secret extortions of the Czar's officials compensate for a salary so scanty that it would be hardly sufficient for a week. A budget in that country is a mere dream. Salaries increase or diminish, not annually, but weekly, or daily, according to the cunning or daring of the individual. It is impossible to calculate the taxes—always too great—yet, whatever the amount, four times as much is paid to the official agents. “Where all are rogues, no one is a rogue,” is a Russian saying. Muscovy exhibits a singular spectacle to an impartial observer, having merely her slaves and taskmasters, *i. e.* the fourteen classes, forming so many grades of the sole institution—the Autocracy. The emperor, however, notwithstanding his crown and sceptre, as the representative and head of the government, is still only the first rogue in his empire, since he must submit to suffer other rogues in office. The word *must* seems to contradict the idea of unlimited absolutism; yet, unhappily for fifty millions of subjects, the Czar's power, though absolute in all other respects, is restricted in this by the very nature of things. Nicholas has lately proclaimed himself (and any Czar could have done the same) the fourth person of the Trinity, without a single individual in his dominions dreaming of questioning the legitimacy of his divine pretensions; but woe to that Czar who should refuse to patronize the chartered rogues!

The Czars may in safety erect scaffolds for princes, or banish them to Siberia, but dare not take cognizance of the mal-administration of their officers, lest the very scarf with which they gird themselves should serve to teach them by what physiologic law mortals may perish in a critical moment. They know it; and in consonance with this unyielding law, Nicholas has issued an ukase, threatening equal punishment to the briber and the bribed, in order at once to crush all prosecution of legal venality. The system is so familiar to the Russians, that they have embodied it in a kind of proverbial idyl:—"The buck robs the  
 "sallow—the wolf robs the buck—the shepherd  
 "robs the wolf—the landlord robs the shepherd—  
 "the attorney robs the landlord—the Czar robs the  
 "attorney, and the Devil himself robs the Czar\*."

Thus did the government scatter poverty with one hand, whilst with the other it implanted slavery. The rich were insurrectionized by the first, the poor by both; and though the welfare of the country, liberty and independence, are sacred objects above all price, yet private and selfish interests are often more influential in provoking the resistance of the bulk of mankind. In the Polono-Russian provinces every interest, moral and physical, national and private, were outraged, and there wanted but

\* Russice:—"Werbu kaza dierot, kazu wolk dierot, wolka  
 "pastuch dierot, pastucha zasidatel dierot, zasidatela prokuror  
 "dierot, prokurora hosudar dierot, a hosudara sam Czort dierot."

an able head to direct the force and resentment of the sufferers.

Aliens did not escape the universal oppression, and Nicholas now compelled the Jews, settled in the country, to take military service. Persecuted during the middle ages in every other country, the Jews had found in Poland an asylum so hospitable, that it was proverbially called their paradise, as it was the heaven of the nobles. Their number is not accurately known, but it is certain that there are as many in Poland alone as in the rest of Europe. The prejudices of the Jews must be understood before the offence given by this new ukase can be fully appreciated. Their customs do not allow of military service, and least of all in Russia, where no one who has not received baptism can rise from the ranks. What cares a Jew for any war that does not tend to the recovery of the holy land? To preserve, and, if possible, to increase the race, is also one of the sacred dogmas of their religion and their policy. During twenty centuries of persecution they have maintained a kind of negative existence, and may be said to have, in many countries, rendered themselves a poison, in order that oppression may not digest them. The new ukase proved for them an era of calamity. The young men being chiefly taken as recruits, the population was diminished both by the chances of war and the loss of heads of families. The Jewish soldier is not allowed to marry, nor can he enrich himself by mercantile pursuits. In the

Russian marine the Jews annually average one in three; and now, by a second ukase, Jewish children were seized and sent to Sebastopol and other ports of the Black Sea, to be brought up as sailors, but every one of these infant victims perished in the hospitals\*. In every instance this exterminating system proceeded with equal severity. The Jews of Ostryn (a miserable borough, belonging to the Count of St. Priest, a French peer), being in arrears for taxes to the amount of 50,000 paper roubles, Nicholas ordered "the account to be settled, by "taking one Jew for 500 roubles, and 115 were "accordingly torn from a community of scarcely "1200, including women and children." In bitter aggravation of this cruelty, they were prohibited from entering a Muscovite province, on any pretext whatsoever; and thus, by diminishing the numbers and the gains of his Jewish subjects, Nicholas created a host of dangerous malcontents. Though very numerous in the Muscovite provinces, it would be difficult to prove their origin. It is said, that at St. Petersburg alone there are 8000 baptized Jews, and numerous instances show that the race does not die under any metamorphosis, least of all in Russia; the oppression of Israel is as keenly felt by the humble pedlar as by the rich monopolist, the state

\* Latterly, since Nicholas extended the same barbarity to Polish children, many of them have been stolen by Russian officers and sold to Jewish parents, to be delivered to the government, in lieu of their own.

dignitary, or the general officer. What a prodigious number of these mysterious personages swarm in Russia ! They are closely connected with their brethren in Poland ; and these again with those dispersed over the continent, forming an association more powerful than the Russians are willing to believe. The financial operations of the empire are in their hands, as well as the army contracts, both for peace and war, and all the inferior official medical establishments. On the issuing of the ukases the Jews began to pray for the success of the Poles, whom it rested with them most effectually to assist, by furnishing arms and money, or by reducing Russia to a state of bankruptcy. Thus one common feeling of abhorrence for the rule of Russia, animated her subjects, of all classes and persuasions, in the very provinces most essential to her existence and to the safety of Europe, and especially of England. A few words will elucidate the fact. Russia had, indeed, no sooner gained possession of the Polish provinces, than by her new acquisitions she immediately extended her influence through Poland of the Vistula over central Europe, and by the provinces beyond the Bug, over Turkey, intending, on the one side, to wrest from Austria and Prussia all the Slavonian countries, and, on the other, to subjugate the Ottoman Porte. It is this real view of the Polish question that renders it one of universal interest, as it involves, not alone the civilization and liberty of central and western Europe, together

with the future destiny of the Slavonian nations, but also commercial prosperity in the East, and the higher interests of policy and morals.

The influence already attained, by Russia, in Moldavia, Wallachia, Greece, and Turkey, might convince the most sceptical of her ultimate aim. Yet, there are English writers, who maintain that the Czars do not covet the possession of Constantinople, lest her rivalry should prove injurious to their empire. Let not these authors suppose that the conquests of Russia are so devoid of logic:—*Putant enim qui mari potitur eum rerum potiri.* Of this truth the Czars are perfectly aware, and their settlements on the Caspian and Black Seas, are but their first bivouacs on their march to Constantinople. Strong incentives prompt, the will and power are not wanting. The most important portions of the empire, European and Asiatic, lie towards the South, communicating far more easily with the Mediterranean than the Baltic, but deprived of those natural advantages by the eccentric position of the capital. St. Petersburg may be compared to a leech unprofitably sucking the vital resources of the empire. The dangerous centralization, at one extremity of Russia, of all branches of its administration, of its riches, and of the court, causes the blood of the giant empire to flow unnaturally from fertile countries to deserts and steppes, from a genial climate to a temperature of snow and ice. Built by dint of the knout, in the

centre of a morass, and peopled by an ukase, St. Petersburg keeps the whole empire in a state of apoplexy. Sound policy calls on the Czars to abandon a situation of such incessant and violent constraint; and, by transferring their capital to the South, to give the empire a more natural constitution, and secure its future existence and extension. It is known that St. Petersburg was originally built with the view of acquiring the maritime power essential to the protection of commerce. Success did not crown the plan. The Russians, it is true, have no rival on the Baltic; but as it is navigable during only half the year, their ships of the line are usually in dock for seven, if not nine months, a burthen rather than an advantage to the state; the naval service remains imperfect, and able sailors cannot be trained. To secure (as Peter the Great advised) their power on land, by means of power at sea, the Czars now seek to effect on the Mediterranean what they have failed to accomplish on the Baltic. Empires have certain absolute requisites peculiar to each. Large tracts of water are as essential to the prosperity of vast extent of land, as air to animal life, and ere the present century shall be half elapsed, Russia must descend in the scale of political importance, if she does not acquire maritime power. The events of the last hundred years justify the apprehension that she will acquire it. Had any one, previous to the time of Peter the Great, predicted her actual state, his plans would have been



deemed visionary ; for there was less chance that the Russia of that day would arrive at what she now is, than that she should ever achieve what she cannot fail to do, unless she fall crushed by her own weight. Large masses of land seem to have indeed a poetic impulse in themselves, and something fantastic is exhibited in the rise of a political Colossus. Immense material power gives to the Czars a bearing of omnipotence, by which, in order to preserve their autocratism, they inebriate, as with a narcotic beverage, the minds of their subjects with incessant conquests. That same bearing seems to excite in them the political rapacity with which they strive to devour every thing around them. Call it the instinct of a monster or a savage, still the charms of an eastern clime, the monuments and ruins of past glory, the prestige of the City of Constantine the Great, which alone long averted the fall of the Greek empire, and which, as Gibbon remarks, was erected on the only eligible spot for universal dominion—more than all, the Mediterranean itself,—offer irresistible attractions to the imagination of the Czars. After a victory at the isle of Aland, over the Swedish fleet, Peter the Great exclaimed, in a prophetic spirit—“ Nature made “ Russia unique, and she shall have no rival in her “ career ! ” It may be added, that he who built one capital on Swedish ground, and in spite of Swedish cannon ; who burnt down a second under the eye of Napoleon, may possess himself of a third incom-



parably more desirable. As the seat of the Czars, Constantinople would soon become the greatest naval arsenal in the world. The timber of Asia Minor, the iron of the Caucasus, the strong long hemp of Sinope and Trebizond, the power of steam, the Greek and Muscovite sailors, to whom nature has not refused docility, would combine to give Russia a fleet powerful enough to realize the most sanguine plans of Peter the Great; and this fleet might, besides, be commanded by naval officers from the United States of America, who would see, with infinite satisfaction, a rival to England in the old world. The fall of Turkey would then make England regret the dismemberment of Poland, the natural ally of the Porte. To be blind to the chances of such a consummation, and, should England attempt to oppose it, to the no less probable attack on India, is, no doubt, comfortable, but neither wise nor safe. Had Poland remained independent and intact, these gigantic schemes could never have been contemplated by the Czars. Let Russia (the geographical situation of Poland being borne in mind) be imagined as extending from the Icy sea to the Crimea, without the Polish provinces, on the one hand; and, on the other, Poland supposed to be re-established, Russia would then at once be cut off from Odessa and Turkey, as well as from all communication with central Europe. Poland has, therefore, become the conductor of the Czar's power from the North to the East, South and West, and is, in

his political system, that which the heart is for the circulation of the blood, the pulse of a new North. Ancient Poland, as the Congress of Vienna proposed, and the insurrection of 1830 vainly endeavoured, to re-establish her, stretched towards the Black Sea, and comprised Odessa, Akerman, and the mouth of the Dnieper. The Tatars of the Crimea were her neighbours, and those of Otchakoff recognised her supremacy. The Dniester separated her from Moldavia, and towards the mouth of the Dnieper were the Cossacks, who, in their expeditions down the Black Sea, carried alarm to the suburbs of Constantinople. Organized as a regular militia by Sigismund the First and Stephen Batory, they formed an effective guard to Christendom against the Turks, the Tatars, and the Muscovites. This force, now wielded by Russia, enables her to press upon Turkey; but it is evident that her Polish provinces, both in the North and South, occupying a central position in this aggressive system, and uniting her former to her new acquisitions, would, if thrown into a state of insurrection, interrupt the military, administrative, and commercial intercourse throughout the empire, and finally dislodge the Colossus from its pedestal. In this point of view, a protracted warfare would prove more advantageous than even a victory near Warsaw. In speaking of Russia, the idea of her being a desert, physically and politically, should be borne in mind. Inaccessible in the interior, her invulnerable points are on the frontiers, of

which the Polish provinces form the boundary line towards Europe. Her real strength lies in her conquests, all situated towards the limits of her empire. Take these away, and the remainder can neither be conquered, nor is worth the attempt. Had Napoleon been aware of this, his campaign would have been successful; and never was there a greater mistake than that he committed in sacrificing strategy to tactics through his desire for battles, after he had obtained the object of war by the occupation of the Polish provinces. From Vilno or Kiow, but not from Moscow, he might, had he consented to winter in Poland, have dictated a treaty as favourable for France as disastrous to Russia or England.

Besides the peril which the Czars entailed on their native empire, by the oppression of the Polish provinces, they were threatened by one of no less magnitude on the part of their own Russian subjects. Their intercourse with the Poles, since the partition, aided by foreign education, and their campaigns against Napoleon, have awakened the conviction amongst the military aristocracy of Russia, that their country can only become free and civilized by the dismemberment of her parts. Upon this principle, "The Secret Society of the True Sons of Russia," was established, in 1816, at Moscow; and subsequently directed by a Committee for the Northern department of St. Petersburg, and for the Southern at Tultchyn, at the head of which

were Pestel and Ryleyeff, both men of considerable ability. The idea of the former was to separate Russia into as many independent nations as it originally consisted of, which he proposed then to form into two Confederate Republics—a Northern and a Southern—on the model of the United States of America; and the Polish and Russian Jews scattered through the empire were to be settled in some part of Asia. A military revolution, of which examples were not wanting in Spain, Naples, and Piedmont, was the appointed means for carrying this scheme into effect. Speaking of the Romanoff dynasty, Pestel said—“I must have thirteen victims; for, though it be cruel to murder women, it is indispensable that the whole of the Imperial family should be for ever cut off from the throne.” He did not quite forget himself in his arrangements, reserving as his own share the Presidency of one of the republics for ten years, after which he intended to retire into some monastery at Kiow, and die a monk! The Association spread still wider in 1824, by its union with the Slavonian Society of Borysoff, which had for its object the formation of a Confederate Republic, to consist of Russia, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Servia, Bosnia, Moldavia, and Wallachia—in other words, of all the Slavonian countries. This gigantic project promises now to be effected in the form of an absolute monarchy.

The presence, however, of a brother of the Czar at Warsaw, who might march at the head of the Polish and Lithuanian corps to quell a revolution in St. Petersburg, caused some anxiety to these Russian associations. They learned, therefore, with much satisfaction, that the Poles also meditated breaking their chains, and under these circumstances it was easy to establish a mutual understanding. Shortly after Colonel Krzyzanowski had an interview at Kiow with Bestuzeff and Muravieff, two members of the Russian Association. "It is time," said the Russian, "that the two nations should "cease to hate each other, the interest of both being "the same. Our Association will use every effort "to obliterate all cause of mutual aversion." He then endeavoured to obtain a promise, that, in the event of a Russian revolution, the Poles would rid themselves of Constantine, without scruple as to the means employed; but Krzyzanowski, who had been sent thither to make observations, rather than to contract engagements, was inflexible on this point, and the parties separated without deciding on any determinate plan of action.

A second interview took place at Kiow in the beginning of 1825, between Prince A. Jablonowski for the Poles, and Pestel for the Russians, at the residence of the Russian Prince Wolkonsky. Pestel construed the aversion of the Poles to shed royal blood, into a personal attachment to Constantine, and desired to know what kind of government they

intended to establish. It was with much difficulty that Jablonowski could make him comprehend that, though conspiring against the same power, the views of the two parties were different—that of the Russians being to acquire liberty—of the Poles, to recover their territory and independence. At length it was decided, that the latter should prevent Constantine from marching to St. Petersburg, regain their provinces, and establish a government of their own choice ; but as respected eventual co-operation, nothing was even this time finally determined.

In December, of the same year, Alexander died at Taganrog, just as a dangerous revolution was on the eve of breaking out. The words of a French writer, that, “ *Une belle vie est une pensée de la jeunesse exécutée par l’âge mûr,*” cannot be applied in full to him ; for though in youth animated by a generous spirit, in after-life his motto was, “ *Concolor vero dolus.*” A liberal Czar would be an anomaly, which Alexander was not. That he was not devoid of sensibility, is evident from the remorse he felt for his crimes. “ Two years before his death,” says Sir James Wylie, his English physician, “ Alexander fell into “ marasmus and insanity. Like all madmen, he had “ lucid intervals, in which the last ray of reason is the “ brightest that the dying lamp emits. In that im- “ mediately before his death he exclaimed, ‘ What “ ‘ an atrocious action.’ To what did he allude ?” asks Sir James, and thus replies,—“ Alexander had “ committed two great crimes ; he suffered his father

“ to be assassinated, and Napoleon to be slowly “ murdered.” It is certain that his parricide destroyed his peace of mind, and that he sought refuge from the spectre that haunted his imagination, in religious mysticism, and finally embraced the Roman Catholic creed, which does not refuse absolution to any penitent who sincerely repents of his sins\*.

By Constantine’s abdication, Nicholas ascended the imperial throne, which was, as usual, stained with blood ; but on the present occasion it was with that of the subjects. The Pestel revolution broke out and failed, both in St. Petersburg and Kiow ; and Pestel, Muravieff, and others, died on the scaffold, martyrs for Russian liberty. There was scarcely a family of distinction in the empire but was more or less implicated in the catastrophe ; and though the great scheme did not then succeed, it is

\* His conversion is proved by the following fact :—During his journey to Taganrog, at Orsza, he had three private interviews, each lasting several hours, with a Franciscan friar, celebrated for his piety. In his last agony, he refused to see any priest of the Greek church, and died without spiritual aid. The empress had been converted to the Roman Catholic faith by the Jesuits, and on her death-bed was attended by a Romish priest. This religious apostacy produced a romantic affection between the imperial couple, who had before mutually avoided each other. The Jesuits effected many conversions, especially of females, and on this account were subsequently expelled from Russia, at the instigation of the Greek clergy.



believed that the day may yet come when it will be effected.

By the confessions of the Russian conspirators, the new Czar learnt the existence of the Patriotic Association in Poland, and, in consequence, he authorised Constantine to arrest whomsoever he might think proper. Colonel Krzyzanowski, who was certain to be amongst the number, refused to listen to the entreaties of the officers at Warsaw, either to hasten the insurrection, or to secure his own safety by flight. Believing that the insurrection would break out of itself, in the mean time he chose the doom of a martyr, rather than that of a hero ; and so also did his colleagues. Constantine executed the order to its fullest extent, and having filled seven state prisons in Warsaw, besides the fortresses of Zamosc and Modlin, he instituted a committee of his courtiers to examine the prisoners. After the lapse of a year, eight persons were committed on a charge of high treason, which the interviews, already mentioned, with the Russians, tended greatly to aggravate. Resolved that the affair should end tragically, Constantine demanded that they should be tried by a court-martial, by which he thought to justify his former acts of violence, illegal imprisonment, and oppressive decrees ; and in this he was supported by Novosilzoff, who was anxious to prove, by a bloody sentence, that he was right in whatever he had advised for the destruction of Poland.



The supremacy of the one in the administration, and the credit of the other at the court of the new Czar, depended on their counsel being approved. It was sufficient that any opinion should be held by them, to ensure its opposition by Lubecki, who had, besides, all along assured the Czars of the unshaken fidelity of the Poles, and advocated the propriety of a legal trial by a high national court, composed of senators. A violent contest ensued in the state council, conducted with extraordinary skill by Lubecki, whose wish to humble his two opponents, rendered him the guardian of the law, and the defender of the prisoners in the first instance, and then of their judges. All that high intellect and eloquence could do—animated by such motives, and by the difficulty of his position between Russian policy, ably supported by Novosilzoff, and the necessity of saving the state prisoners—between the Czar and the Czarewitch—was done, and with perfect success by Lubecki, whose character for patriotism was thus established.

Beaten on this point, Novosilzoff still did not relinquish his design, and demanded of the State Council, what should be done with the prisoners, in case of their acquittal? This question—proposed for the first time in a civilized country—was seriously discussed, and it was resolved that they should be detained in prison, until the decree of the court should be confirmed by the sovereign—in

other words, that they should be punished, in spite of their acquittal.

Although the government apparently adopted a legal course with regard to the prisoners, still Novosilzoff, at the suggestion of Constantine, and with the Czar's approbation, drew up an organic statute of proceedings, by which the High Court was directed to adhere, during the trial, and which, when applied to the Polish criminal code, was found to contain such glaring contradictions, that the senators might acquit the prisoners with perfect security to themselves. The High Court, in which the senator Bielinski presided, began by annulling the report of the special committee, the statements therein contained having been extorted by flogging, as was proved, on the person of the senator Soltyk, a man eighty years of age. After a full investigation of the affair, it appeared that the charge of high treason could not be substantiated; Colonel Krzyzanowski was alone found guilty of the non-revelation of the Russian conspiracy.

Every effort was made to induce the High Court to pass sentence of death on the prisoners, hints being thrown out, in that case, of royal mercy, whilst, at the very time, a proposition was before council, for establishing a colony of condemned Poles in Siberia! Pending the trial, obstinate and scandalous struggles continually occurred between

the police and the populace, to the infinite vexation of Constantine as well as Novosilzoff, who sought comfort in intoxication. To Lubecki this was a season of the highest satisfaction, not at the aspect now assumed by the trial, but at the triumph which he considered it afforded him, at St. Petersburg, over the imperial commissary, forgetful that he was thus preparing a mine which might ruin, by its explosion, himself, his rival, the kingdom, and his master's throne. The populace repairing in throngs to the palace, where the trial was conducted, Constantine, in his hatred of them, rendered himself a policeman of the court, forbidding those without uniforms to enter at all, and compelling the rest to inscribe their names in a book, with a view to facilitate future persecution. Driven from the avenues of the palace, the people collected in the adjacent square; and on a squadron advancing to expel them, fresh fights ensued. Malignant satires, or bold appeals, were circulated in MS., in default of a free press; their effect being the greater, as the authors were unknown, and remained so, in spite of the efforts of the police to discover them. Close watch was kept by the spies over the relations, and even the visitors of the senators, who continued to rise in public opinion in proportion as they were persecuted. The court was thus beset, on the one hand by the Grand Duke and all the mercenary in Poland, on the other by all who desired to humble him and his

minions. Their wish was gratified. The High Court, with the exception of General Krasinski, unanimously acquitted the prisoners of high treason, Krzyzanowski alone being condemned to six years' imprisonment (commencing from the time of his arrest) for not having revealed the conspiracy. Such a verdict, pronounced by the most distinguished men of the country, might have proved to the despotic triumvirate, that when Poles make an effort to restore their country, no intimidation will induce other Poles to view it as a crime. The national spirit had never been so decidedly manifested, since the establishment of the kingdom. Warsaw was actually in insurrection, having its government in the High Court, against which Constantine struggled in vain for the interests of the empire, endangered by the observation of a single article of the charter, introduced by Alexander, and sworn to by Nicholas.

As if still further to exasperate the emperor, thirsting more than ever for vengeance on the Poles since the late effusion of Russian blood, Bielinski, the president, forwarded a report illustrative of the sentence passed by the court, which may be thus epitomized:—"That so far from being guilty of  
" high treason, the prisoners had done no more than  
" their duty in promoting the interests of nationality,  
" guaranteed by the treaty of Vienna, and by  
" Alexander's solemn promise to unite all his Polish  
" subjects."

It needed not the commentary with which Constantine accompanied this document, to infuriate Nicholas, indignant not less at the irony veiled under terms apparently respectful to the throne, and dignified for the nation, than at the boldness with which it justified the prisoners by the very words of Alexander, and hinted at the separation of the country in case of further aggressions on the charter. After reading the report, he wrote to his brother, “ *J'en conclus que le président, par ce*  
“ *rapport, a manqué à ses devoirs envers son roi,*  
“ *envers sa patrie, et qu'il doit être accusé de crime*  
“ *d'état.*” The difficulty lay in selecting the persons to conduct the trial of the president, who, on being interrogated as to the author of the document, and whether it expressed his own opinion, or that of all the senators, replied that he was merely the organ of their sentiments, and that Prince Czartoryski had drawn up the report. On being superseded at Vilno, by Novosilzoff, the Prince had gone to Italy ; but on receiving intelligence of the impending trial, he hastened back to resume his seat in the senate, and no longer restrained by personal considerations for Alexander, had openly joined the opposition. To his marked interference in favour of the prisoners, it may be attributed, that Nicholas dropped his design of calling the senate to account.

Constantine, however, was little disposed for submission ; and by his advice, in September 1828,

Nicholas demanded of the council whether the sentence of the High Court might be attributed to the imperfection of the code, or to the disposition of its members to encourage criminal designs ; as in that case he would take measures to extirpate such abominable doctrines. Lubecki, as the originator of the High Court, without which a court-martial could have condemned the prisoners (a practice usual under Alexander), was accountable for its acts. Constantine and Novosilzoff, therefore, hoped, by these questions, to force him either to confess that the senators had countenanced high treason, thus virtually owning himself guilty, or to declare that in not condemning an attempt to throw off the yoke of Russia, they committed no guilt. He chose the latter alternative, and still more signally foiled his antagonists. A contest now ensued in the State Council, and lasted two months, during all which time he displayed such talent, patience, and rhetorical power, sometimes speaking for eight hours at once, as commanded the applause even of his adversaries, and secured to him a character for patriotism, of which he afterwards availed himself to mislead the insurrection. The debate concluded, by resolving that the acquittal arose from a defect in the law ; and a separate report was drawn up, and presented by each minister, for the consideration of the emperor. Lubecki's was the most remarkable. With incomparable acuteness it traced the manifold contradic-

tions of the code, and pointed out the organic statute composed by Novosilzoff, as the cause of endless confusion, by providing the High Court with a justification as efficient as could have been devised by the greatest foe of Russian sway. The following extract may serve as a specimen of his sophistry :—“ Had I been in the place of the judges, “ I would have surmounted every obstacle, impelled by the high feeling, that the slightest attempt “ against the royal authority, or even the non- “ revelation of such an attempt, should be visited “ with the utmost rigour. On this ground alone, “ I would, without scruple, have condemned the “ prisoner Krzyzanowski, although guilty rather of “ imprudence than of any criminal intent. Still, as “ I should have done so in absolute defiance of “ existing statutes, and as such contempt of the “ law might have entailed fatal consequences, it “ follows that one who would so have dared, “ would have deserved the greatest punishment ; “ *and had there been two Lubeckis, the one minister, and the other judge, the former ought to “ have sentenced the latter to be hanged.*” Similar reports were forwarded by all the other ministers except Hauke (a naturalized German), who suggested, for such cases, in future, a court-martial, consisting of Poles and Russians. The minister Mostowski, in his approval of Lubecki’s opinion, made the following profound and ambiguous observation, the deep sense of which, however, was



probably lost to the congealed brains on the Neva :—" Il est difficile qu'une nation conquise s'entende avec ses dominateurs, surtout lorsque les principes de leurs gouvernemens respectifs ont pendant des siècles été entièrement opposés. Il faut voir écouler des générations avant que les sujets nouvellement acquis parviennent à comprendre *qu'il ne s'agit plus de discuter, mais simplement d'obéir.*"

This blow was the more irritating to Constantine, as it was dealt by men who had hitherto been subservient to him. He forwarded to the Czar a fresh report upon those of the ministers, which produced no effect. His disappointment was so great, that he compared it with that which he considered the greatest calamity that had befallen him in life—the introduction by Nicholas of a new form of military pantaloons and buttons, contrary to his representation, and in the language of the courtiers of the Belvedere, he thenceforth wore the aspect of a cloud. Following the example of his minister Novosilzoff, he sought comfort in intoxication. Notwithstanding their acquittal, the prisoners were carried to St. Petersburg, where they lingered a year in the prison of Petro-Paulosk ; Colonel Krzyzanowski was never released, and his fate is still unknown. The senators remained for six months under the surveillance of the Warsaw police, till, at length, Nicholas was persuaded to ratify their sentence, not without assuring them, at the same time, of the paternal



displeasure he felt towards them all, except General Krasinski, whom he pronounced to have deserved well of his own country, and of the empire. Bielinski died shortly after, and his funeral was a national solemnity. Czartoryski delivered an oration in honour of the deceased. The students of the University followed his remains to the grave, and beat off the police, who endeavoured to prevent their dividing the pall amongst them, every one being desirous of preserving some memorial of the virtuous patriot. General Krasinski's son, not attending the procession, was the next day expelled from the University by his fellow students, and not even Constantine ventured to interpose in his behalf. This funeral raised the insurrectionary spirit to the highest pitch, even the dead thus conspiring with the living against the Czars. A word from any of the senators would have sufficed to rouse the people ; but having performed their duty, they also were more ready to become martyrs than heroes, leaving the task to younger men, and it was not long before these were found.

In barracks not far from the Belvedere, more than 160 pupils pursued their military studies, as ensigns or cornets, cut off from all communication with any one besides Constantine, who caressed, invited, or condemned them to merciless chastisement, according to his momentary caprice. These youths, each competent to command a regiment, a brigade, or a division, to the satisfaction even of the much requiring

Constantine,—patriotic, with all the enthusiasm belonging to their age, were thought, by their superintendent, Peter Wysocki, a sub-lieutenant of the grenadier life guards, fit instruments for an insurrection. This man, thus accidentally rendered the first mover of the insurrection in 1830, though he had read many works on history and tactics, possessed little knowledge, and was entirely destitute of what is usually called “genius.” His inspiration was in his heart; feeling supplied the place of thought; and his talents were his passionate love of his country, his courage, and his inflexible honesty. The great trial was no sooner over than he formed (December 1828) the ensigns into secret societies, ready to rise in arms at the first fitting opportunity—nor was it long before that opportunity offered.

In June 1829, Nicholas, accompanied by all his family, arrived in Warsaw, to be crowned. The ceremony was marked by the following occurrence. The Czar, having placed the crown of the Polish king upon his head, the Archbishop Woronicz read the prayer for the sovereign, ending with, “Long live the king!” The aspiration was echoed only by the walls of the cathedral,—and a second time was received in nearly equal silence, a few voices only joining. A more explicit protest against Russian usurpation had been meditated by the ensigns; and they accordingly came to parade on the square of Saxony, in presence of the Imperial family, with their muskets loaded, resolved, by one blow, to

punish the house of Romanoff for a century of crime. Russia being then at war with Turkey, these young men considered their *coup-d'état* as far superior to what any diplomatist could devise on that occasion. But certain members of the diet representing to them, that no Pole had ever stained himself with royal blood, they desisted, after vainly urging the *salus patriæ suprema lex esto*, and that their present ruler was not a king, but an usurper. The Turkish war being ended to his satisfaction, Nicholas, in May 1830, summoned the first and last diet held during his reign, at the same time informing the deputies that they were called together *solely by his will*. Alexander would have termed it the *impulse of his heart*. The diet, though recruited by some courageous characters, still fell far short of the lofty feelings so powerfully raised by the High Court, and which now urged the nation with irresistible force against the foreign rulers. This characteristic of the diet, which was destined afterwards to rule the insurrection, should be constantly kept in mind. It endeavoured, though vainly, to bring to trial the minister who had delayed the publication of the sentence pronounced by the High Court, and was constrained to vote the erection of a monument to Alexander, proposed by Nicholas himself, in honour of his predecessor's tyranny.

The existence of the kingdom may be said to have terminated with the fourth diet. From this moment *le tems vole et les évènements avec lui*. Yet, before

the Poles rose to expel the foreign intruder, they gained an important moral triumph. The general excitement, which found no utterance in the diet, burst forth like a volcano, and found a channel for its glowing vitality in the wide field of literature, where two parties soon took their stand—the respective followers of Classicism and Romanticism. Their dispute may be said to have hinged upon the question, whether poetry should be fettered by the rules of Horace, or left free as the muse of Shakspeare. The former, in fact, contended for the maintenance of foreign authority, the latter preached a crusade against all authority. The nation, from its abhorrence of foreign rule, joined the Romanticists, and they gained a further triumph, by the support of A. Mickiewicz, one of the Vilno Radiants, who, having been banished to the Caucasus by Alexander, and subsequently, at the request of Prince Galiczyn, removed to St. Petersburg, had there, under the very eye of the enemy, published his *Conrad Wallenrod*, a poem conveying a profound political lesson to the heart of his compatriots. The hero, a Lithuanian and a Pagan, taken prisoner by the Teutonic knights during one of their wars of extermination with his country, accepts service in the ranks of the crafty order, rises to be grand master, and being thus obliged to lead the war against his native land, betrays the Teutonic army to inevitable ruin, and then delivers himself up to death at the hands of the knights. The Poles, identifying Wallenrod with

Prince Czartoryski, showed, by the avidity with which the work was read, that they comprehended the poet's meaning. He made a no less powerful appeal to his countrymen in *Grazyna*, another poem, celebrating the devotion of a Lithuanian lady to her husband and country. Such compositions did much to fan the flame of independence; and thus, when accounts of the French July revolution reached Warsaw, the whole population, as with one voice, spoke only of insurrection.

Constantine, now alarmed in his turn, endeavoured, as a conciliatory measure, to reform an abuse which hitherto he had himself countenanced. A committee (consisting entirely of his courtiers) had formerly been established in concert with the Warsaw municipality, for the purpose of providing quarters for the officers of the Russian garrison; and, although magnificent barracks had since been erected at the expense of the city, the householders were still required to pay the previous exorbitant tax for the accommodation of 200 generals attached to 8000 troops. The Czarewitch now appointed a commission to inquire into this abuse; but this tardy semblance of justice only plunged him into still greater perplexity. Suddenly rumours burst forth of an approaching revolt; appeals were circulated amongst the Polish regiments; bills stuck on the walls of the Belvedere, announced it to be let from the commencement of the new year. Yet the police, with all their alertness, could no where

find the conspirators, the alarm being a fabrication of the committee, in order to divert the thoughts of Constantine from his proposed reform, as also to obtain further marks of his protection for themselves, the greater part of them being chiefs of the Secret Police\*. Sheltered by the interest taken in the false revolution, Peter Wysocki was enabled more securely to mature the true one, and daily to gain fresh partisans in the garrison. There was no hesitation about the choice of a leader. The nation, as well as himself, unanimously assigned that post to the non-commissioned General Chlopicki; and Constantine, aware of the popular admiration, did what he could to undermine it, by assuming that the general was on friendly terms with himself. The 18th of October, 1830, and the square of Saxony had been the day and place first fixed upon for the outbreak; but all things not being ready, it was deferred till the 29th of November. By some mismanagement, however, notice of the alteration was not given to all the conspirators, and many young men, armed with pistols, appeared in the square on the day first assigned. Chlopicki was present, and the Czarewitch, anxious to show the people that the general did not share their animosity, hastened to meet and walk with him. This remarkable scene recalled that of Egmont and the Duke of Alba. Armed young men were placed all around, impatient for the signal, whilst

\* Memoirs of M. Kozuchowski, a Referendary of State. (Polish Kronika, Vol. V.)

the future chief of the insurrection walked with the brother of the Czar, the first victim or prisoner of that same insurrection. So moved this stately man through the streets of Warsaw, a problem for his nation, doomed to repose in him a blind confidence, and not less so to Russia, who had not such a general to oppose him.

Affairs went on yet more rapidly, during the month of November. An imperial ukase, placed the Polish army on a war establishment, with a view, as was then surmised, and afterwards demonstrated by papers found in the Belvedere, of making it the vanguard of a possible coalition of the northern powers against France. Lubecki also received an order to hold in readiness the funds accumulated by his ruinous measures. Thus the Poles were menaced with infamy, should they take part in a liberticidal war, and merited ruin, should they allow their resources to be applied in its support. It was wiser, therefore, to employ both their arms and treasure against a foe already weakened by the late campaign, at a moment also when no hostile intervention was to be apprehended from Austria, and when an effectual check on Prussia, if not other positive aid, might be expected from the France of July. But, although these considerations might hasten, they certainly did not cause this last effort of the Poles; who must have utterly sunk as a nation had they, with resistance still in their power, continued to compromise and submit.



With regard to Wysocki, as a military man, he foresaw the perdition of Poland in the first victory won by the Polish troops in conjunction with those of Russia, which would cement their fraternity by the powerful prestige of common danger and glory ; the insurrection therefore, was unalterably fixed for the 29th of November. Let the tyranny of their oppressors justify the insurgents with those who think they require justification ; Poles admit of no such need, and assign no other reason than their irrevocable determination to be free.

On the 27th, all being prepared for the following Monday, some of the young conspirators went to a ball to amuse themselves, as they believed, for the last time. Thus eleven years of conspiracy closed with dancing. The following Sunday the same youths went to church and confessed themselves, and thus confirmed the words of the poet :—

“ Between the acting of a dreadful thing,  
“ And the first motion, all the interim is  
“ Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream :  
“ The genius, and the mortal instruments  
“ Are then in council ; and the state of man,  
“ Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
“ The nature of an insurrection.”



## CHAPTER III.

### *Insurrection at Warsaw.*

THE conspirators had formed their plan with a view of disarming, or, in case of resistance, of disabling the Russian garrison at Warsaw, which at that time consisted of five regiments; two infantry, and one cuirassiers, one hussars, and one lancers; in all, about 8,000 men, with six pieces of artillery. The Polish force consisted of three regiments; the grenadier life guards, the horse chasseurs life guards, and the fourth of the line, with a battalion of sappers, sixteen companies drawn from various other regiments, and twelve pieces of artillery. Total, about 9,000. Thus the Poles had the superiority, both as to numbers and effectiveness, as the Russian cavalry could not possibly act with advantage in the streets. The Grand Duke Constantine was to be taken, alive or dead. The signal for the attack, which was to commence at six o'clock in the evening simultaneously at all points, was the setting fire to an old brewery in Solec, at the southern extremity of Warsaw, and near the Belvedere. Between the palace and the barracks, where the Russian cavalry were quartered, lies the park of Lazienki.

On the 29th of November, eighteen civilians, mostly young students of the university, who had been admitted into the conspiracy, assembled at the appointed hour in the park, by the bridge of Sobieski. Owing to some unaccountable accident the fire was kindled at half-past five instead of six, and had already died away, and this mistake nearly caused the failure of the plot. The Russian cavalry as well as the police had taken alarm ; numerous sentinels with lights traversed the park in every direction, and the student conspirators owed their safety solely to the extreme darkness of the night. Tranquillity was soon restored ; but the eighteen adventurers had still to wait a full hour, long as a century, for a new signal of attack. The delay was owing to the non-appearance of Wysocki, who, contrary to his usual punctuality, had remained thus long in the city. At seven o'clock he arrived, and immediately hastened to the ensigns' barracks, whilst Louis Nabelak, a civilian of great courage, divided the eighteen young men into two bands, of nine persons each. At the head of one of these, composed of the strongest men amongst them, for in moral courage all were equal, he marched to the Belvedere by the principal gate, whilst the other watched the palace from the rear. Rushing into the court-yard, he vociferated " Death to the tyrant ! " and the cry, accompanied by the report of firing in the adjacent barracks, alike terrified the household and animated the invaders. They pursued their way, breaking through doors, without encountering any opposition. A deep

silence reigned in the palace; at length they perceived a man lying down behind the door. It was the Vice President of Municipality Lubovidzki, who had brought the information that a revolution was on the eve of breaking out. Several strokes left him senseless on the floor, but not dead, owing to the inexpertness of the young men in the trade of arms. The bird, so they called Constantine, was however flown. He had been dragged out of bed by his servants on the first alarm, and carried to the princess Lowicka's pavilion. She instantly summoned her ladies in waiting, and placing Constantine in the midst she knelt with them in prayer, persuaded that the defence offered by religion, and by sex, would disarm all Polish revenge. These first avengers of their nation, having spread alarm through the palace which had for fifteen years served as a bastille to their countrymen, were retreating, when they accidentally met the Russian General Gendre, "the basest of the base," as Constantine used to call him. "Je suis Général du jour," he exclaimed; but with them it was the day of long protracted vengeance, and he fell dead beneath their weapons. Having rejoined his other band, Nabelak hastened back to the bridge of Sobieski, where he found the ensigns at a propitious moment, a part of the Russian cavalry driven from their barracks having galloped to the Belvedere.

When Wysocki presented himself to the ensigns, who were at that moment listening to a lecture on tactics, he drew his sword, loudly exclaiming, "Poles!

“ the hour of revenge is come at last, we conquer or  
“ die this night, let our breasts prove a Thermopylæ  
“ to our enemies !” To arms, to arms ! responded  
the young athlets, while they loaded their muskets  
and rushed down, prepared in less time than is re-  
quired for the pen to describe the scene. They  
marched directly to the cavalry barracks, and on  
reaching them, fired in the air as a signal to six  
companies of Polish grenadiers, whose support they  
had been assured of; and these were the shots heard  
when Nabelak invaded the Belvedere. Advancing  
rapidly the ensigns fired on the Russian cavalry,  
a great number of whom were already mounted,  
and fifty men were killed on the spot. The rest  
fled from the barracks. Another such attack on  
the opposite side would have annihilated them.  
Wysocki, with his one-hundred and sixty com-  
panions, finding it expedient to quit the barracks,  
took position at the bridge, in order to await there  
the arrival of the before-mentioned companies.  
The enemy, however, recovered from their first  
surprise, and ashamed of having been expelled from  
the fortified barracks by a handful of young men,  
prepared to avenge their defeat. The cuirassiers had  
already occupied the road leading to the city, in  
order to cut off Wysocki’s retreat, but without losing  
a moment he attacked them so sharply with the  
bayonet that they could not resist. The regiment  
of lancers, which had marched upon the ensigns  
threatening to cut them to pieces, also fled before

their bayonets, as did a hussar regiment, which had advanced on the rear of the young warriors. These at length reached the barracks of Radziwill, where Wysocki endeavoured to occupy the three cavalry regiments as long as possible, to prevent them from paralyzing the insurrection within the city ; but on hearing the cry of the standard-bearers, " the Russians " besiege us ! " he abandoned his project. They were again compelled to attack the three regiments alternately, and were successful as before, the cavalry taking to flight in great disorder. After this extraordinary achievement, the young heroes marched unresisted into the city, through the New World-street. Meeting with General Stanislaus Potocki, they entreated him to put himself at their head. On his refusal they allowed him to pass on, not being aware that it was he who had sent to Constantine the six companies of infantry, and thus endangered the success of the insurrection\*. As deep a stillness prevailed in the city as though nothing had occurred ; the very houses seemed asleep ; the brave youths began to suspect that they

\* He was afterwards killed by the people, for continuing to act against the insurrection ; he was not actuated by a want of patriotism, for he had ever proved a staunch Polish patriot ; but unacquainted, like all field-officers and generals, either with the object or extent of the movement, by the early damping of it he hoped to deserve well of the country. He is said yet to have thought the insurrection to be that false revolution spoken of in the foregoing chapter.

had risen alone. To break the appalling silence they shouted again and again, "to arms !" In vain, despair was already creeping into their hearts. Would death alone rouse the capital ? must blood stain their virgin laurels ? Some steps further they met their commander, General Trembicki, one of Constantine's aide-de-camps, and him they entreated, as they had done Potocki, to lead them on. He reprimanded them, and advised them to submit to the Grand Duke's mercy. Professing their respect for his military acquirements, they still urged their request ; and on his persisting in his refusal, forced him to join them. Trembicki, a haughty man, reluctantly accompanied them, still continuing his reprimands, when they unexpectedly came upon three Polish generals, avowed partisans of Russia, who were immediately stretched dead. Once more they addressed Trembicki, "General, you have witnessed the fate of " traitors, we conjure you to join the nation." He still answered, with perfect coolness, "No, I will not " command you ; you are wretches—you are murderers." They were still unwilling to part with their tutor, and again telling him, "We allow you " time for reflection," they conducted him through two long streets, and paused at the Bielanska-street. He then resolutely said, "You may take away my life, but cannot force me to break my oath of allegiance." He fell, and would have deserved a better fate, had not his heroism been that of a slave.

No part of the concerted plan was realized in the

southern part of Warsaw. The first alarm over, Constantine rallied his cavalry at the Belvedere, and his forces were increased by the Polish regiment of horse chasseurs, brought him by his aide-de-camp Trembicki, brother of him who was shot, and by Potocki's six companies of infantry. This general had also given up to him four Polish cannon, which were to have been fired as alarm guns from the Radziwill barrack.

Owing to the untimely signal at Solec, the insurgents at the north end succeeded no better in disarming the enemy. They did not begin to move till half past seven o'clock, and the Russian troops, forewarned by Constantine's messengers, were under arms even before the Polish. The latter had still to combat the opposition of the field officers (none of whom had been initiated into the conspiracy), before they could leave their barracks. The disarming of the Russians, an easy task within the barracks, proved impracticable without. Detachments of Polish troops immediately occupied the two bridges across the Vistula, and the city of Praga, in which were warlike stores. Some companies marched straight to the arsenal, situated in the middle of the city, whither also a regiment of Russian infantry was hastening. A contest ensued, and the Russians fled with the loss of some men. During these transactions two officers hurried to the *Théâtre des Variétés*. Drawing their swords, they called out, " Poles ! You are amusing



“ yourselves, whilst the Muscovites murder us. “ To arms ! ” In a moment the theatre was tumultuously cleared. Many Russian generals then made their escape.

Whilst this was passing in the theatre, some patriots endeavoured to insurrectionize the populace in the old town, the classic ground of former insurrections. Large groups collected at their appeal ; but no sooner did the report of firing at the arsenal reach their ears, than they dispersed. Nothing more timid than an unarmed mob, generally, drawn together at first only by curiosity. When the alarm had subsided, the few agitators again attempted to stir up the people, and this time they succeeded in bringing vast multitudes to the arsenal. The ensigns, the artillery pupils, the army of the line, and an immense concourse of persons now thronged in the vicinity of the arsenal. The insurgents having entirely failed in the execution of their plan, and now inferior to their enemies in number, thought it advisable to arm the people, who, according to the original design, were only to have sanctioned by their presence the great national act. Thirty thousand muskets were taken from the arsenal and distributed among the multitudes present, who were harangued by several prisoners of state, just released, after a captivity of many years. Some had actually died on being brought into the light, owing to their long confinement in dark and airless dungeons. The suffering-marked

countenances of others were, in their very silence, eloquent enough to have stirred the stones to mutiny. The armed multitudes dispersed throughout the city, firing volleys in the air, and uttering shouts of joy, but abstained from all excess. The insurgents instinctively assembled at the arsenal, as being a position commanding all the principal streets. But without a leader, they knew not how to set about any act of aggression, although all were animated by an admirable unity of purpose. Where many command, defensive measures are more easily agreed upon, and the insurgents resolved to remain in their present position, at all events until the next morning, and sent detachments to secure the Bank, and other public edifices. About midnight they advanced as far as the square of Saxony, where the fight with the horse chasseurs still continued.

On being informed of the distribution of arms to the people, the command of Constantine to his generals was, "*Messieurs, pas un coup de fusil.*" The recent example of the July revolution in Paris, had, perhaps, impressed him with some respect for the population of Warsaw; or, by allowing only the horse chasseurs to harass the Poles, he, perhaps, hoped to plunge them into civil discord, which might turn to his advantage. Whatever was the motive of his indecision, it was at least the cause that the insurrection survived the night.

The insurgents did not immediately proceed to

establish a government of their own, nor did they make known by any printed document the object of their insurrection. Peter Wysocki too, the chief of the conspiracy, was not to be persuaded that the insurrection ought to have had a government of its own from the very beginning. Lelewel, who was initiated into the conspiracy, had indeed been charged some days previously with the choice of members to form an insurrectionary government; but the death of his father, on the very 29th of November, it is said, prevented him from executing the task. By these accidents the insurrection first appeared without a head, presenting itself only in the form of a mere military riot, or, which was still worse, of civil strife. Much, therefore, had been done to send many an individual to the scaffold, much to entail calamity on the country, and nothing to burst her bondage. On the other side, a powerful government still existed unharmed, and supported by a numerous cast of employés, grown fat upon the oppression of the nation,—by 20,000 German, Greek, French, or English fortune-hunters, and 30,000 Jews, those powerful instruments of the foreign tyranny, now threatened with dissolution. All these formed a great mass hostile to the insurrection—backed by Constantine, and by the immensity of vengeance which he impersonated in the name of him who sways from Kameczatka to the Vistula. The common people alone fraternized with the insurgents,—but what dependance

can be placed on that most variable element? All the others shut up their houses on the first alarm, and the capital wore the appearance of a besieged city at the moment of assault.

Some individuals only, influential by their riches, ability, and personal merit; patriots grown grey in resisting the foreign yoke, and in teaching the young to resist it, yet unwilling to lose, by imprudence, all that was still worth preserving, came forward at this portentous moment, as mediators between Constantine and the military rioters, and for the country at large. Whilst the lieutenant Wysocki raised the standard of Poland's liberty, another, Count Ladislaus Zamoyski, one of Constantine's aide-de-camps, caused a new government to be organized. He accidentally heard of the attack on the Belvedere from a Russian officer, and, by his advice, was proceeding to Constantine, when he met Potocki. This latter enjoined Zamoyski to tell the Grand Duke that the insurrection could be put down only by the Russian cavalry, as the Polish troops were not to be depended upon. On hearing this, Constantine shrugged his shoulders, and exclaimed sorrowfully, "I have now no army," although, at that moment, he was surrounded by many squadrons of fine cavalry, a glance at whom, was Zamoyski's only answer. "They are Russians," observed Constantine, "and I wish not to mix in what has been done by the Poles. Je ne m'en mêle pas," he continued, "que les Polonais s'arrangent; c'est leur affaire; on verra main-

“ tenant s'ils sont dignes des bienfaits qu'ils ont  
“ reçu, et si je n'ai pas eu toujours raison *de les*  
“ *traiter en rebelles.*” In the words “ que les Po-  
“ lonais s'arrangent,” Zamoyski at once perceived  
the security of the insurrection. It was now accom-  
plished, since Constantine made no opposition to it.  
With this important intelligence, he hastened to his  
uncle Prince Czartoryski, and, representing to him that  
a man of his influence ought not to remain neutral  
in a civil war, urged him to try whether a proclama-  
tion issued in his own name, joined with that of  
the administrative council, would not bring the Poles  
to unity and concord. The prince, in consequence,  
convened the Council, of which he was an honorary  
member, and sent Zamoyski to summon the others.  
Prince Lubecki, on the other hand, when apprised  
that the insurrection was without a head, perceived  
the unpardonable blunder, and as quickly resolved  
to avail himself of it, to crush all further proceed-  
ings; and, with this view, he also summoned the  
Administrative Council. Besides the ministers, the  
following distinguished patriots attended:—Prince  
Czartoryski, Prince Radziwill, General Count  
Pac, the Senator Castellan Kochanowski, and the  
venerable Niemcewicz, the most popular poet of  
the nation, and secretary to the senate. Zamoyski,  
at the request of Prince Lubecki, dictated the  
words, “ que les Polonais s'arrangent,” as an in-  
troduction to the sitting; adding, at the same  
time, that the Council might hear them from the

Grand Duke himself. In consequence of this remark, Czartoryski and Lubecki were deputed to wait upon him. He received them bluntly, with “je n'autorise rien—je ne me mêle de rien—laissez-moi tranquille.”—He then bitterly reproached Lubecki for his monopolies and fiscal extortions, and Prince Czartoryski for his exertions in the curatorship of Vilno, as the principal causes of the revolution, forgetting that he was himself its primary author. As nothing could shake his determination to remain neutral, Lubecki was compelled to make the following declaration—“Because you who possess the power, and the right to use it, refuse to act, the Council of Administration, being without means of defence, is obliged to *composer avec le mouvement qui s'opère dans la ville*, in order to save the capital.” On his return, Lubecki, between two and three o'clock in the morning, drew up an Act, by which the above-named patriots were appointed, in the name of the sovereign, members of the council; with the addition of General Chlopicki, whose presence there Lubecki deemed indispensable on this extraordinary occasion. The reformed council then drew up the following proclamation:—“Poles! the events of last night, as deplorable as unexpected, have compelled the government to associate with deserving patriots, and to make this appeal to you. His Highness, the Grand Duke Constantine, has prohibited the Russian troops from all interference, as the dissensions amongst the

“ Poles ought to be adjusted only by Poles. Shall  
“ the Pole embrace his hand in his brother’s blood?  
“ Will you afford the world the spectacle of the  
“ greatest of all misfortunes—that of domestic dis-  
“ cord? It is by your own only that you can avoid  
“ plunging into the abyss upon the brink of which  
“ you are now standing. Restore, therefore, order  
“ and tranquillity—let all animosities vanish with  
“ the night that veiled them. Guard the future  
“ fate of our beloved and woe-stricken fatherland—  
“ remove even the shadow of whatever may endanger  
“ it. It will be our part to care for the general  
“ safety, the national laws, and our constitutional  
“ liberty.” Since the celebrated trial, by the High  
Court, the patriotism of Lubecki had never been  
questioned. The new members, therefore, who  
dreaded civil anarchy, unhesitatingly signed the pro-  
clamation, as a means of promoting general unani-  
mity, excepting General Chlopicki, who was no-  
where to be found. When the cry “ to arms ”  
struck upon his ear at the Théâtre des Variétés,  
he hurried away to conceal himself in a friend’s  
house, apprehensive that the insurgents would  
drag him from his own residence, and compel  
him to place himself at their head. From the  
very beginning the hopes of all were fixed upon  
him. The soldiers and the people required to be  
told that Chlopicki would command them, in order  
to persuade them to remain under arms. Loud  
cheers welcomed the wished-for chief, whom they



fancied they beheld in every horseman that galloped through the streets ; but the night passed away, and still had not made his appearance. The magic influence of his name was, however, alone sufficient to keep the soldiery at their posts, until the dawn of day.

In the morning of the 30th, the capital beheld the novel spectacle of a hated government, owing its preservation solely to the love and confidence felt by the people towards a few conciliatory patriots, who lent it their support ; and of a military insurrection concentrated at the arsenal, and scarcely visible elsewhere :—but the success of such events is often in their very nature. The dawn showed to the dispirited insurgents a thousand youths of the University, who had taken arms under Lach Szyrma, their beloved professor of moral philosophy. In answer to the *delenda Carthago* of the merciless Novosilzoff, he had been accustomed to sound in their ears, *Hic manus ob patriam* ; and the bold watchword, not less than the affection he inspired, secured their ready co-operation. At his call they flocked to his standard, formed themselves into a legion, called the “ garde d'honneur,” elected him their chief, and decided the fate of the insurrection. Their numbers gave fresh courage to the army, and their moral character convinced the government that the affair was national. In fact, these youths, sons of the most distinguished families, in some degree represented the nation, and compelled the country to espouse the cause. They rushed forward,

tore down the Russian emblazonments, and then dispersed over the capital, collecting vast numbers of followers, whom they conducted to the square of Saxony, and the avenue of Cracow, at which places the fighting with the horse chasseurs had continued, without interruption, since day-break.

About eight o'clock some companies of Polish infantry, with two cannon, advanced, and repulsed the chasseurs so effectually, that the latter remained quiet during the whole day. The insurgents then raised a barricade in the avenue, near which a scandalous scene soon afterwards occurred. The populace flocking from Solec, aided by some sappers, attacked a house containing Russian stores, and four millions of roubles, which they pillaged, together with several private habitations. An officer, who opposed their violence, was murdered, and much civil bloodshed would have followed, but for the timely arrival of more officers, who killed some of the ringleaders on the spot, and indemnified the individuals who had been plundered, with the remainder of the Russian money. About ten o'clock a Russian infantry regiment, posted in the Grande Place d'Armes, at the north end of the city, marched against the insurgents at the arsenal, but were so vigorously repulsed, that they fled in disorder to their former position. In the same square was stationed a battalion of grenadier life guards, who, by the ill advice of General Zymirski, would neither act against the insurgents, nor yet join with them. The Russians made no further attack that day; but the

insurgents neglected the opportunity for deliberation afforded them by this respite, and came to no resolution whether to act on the offensive, to acquaint the government with their object, or to assume a self constituted authority. The houses were still closed, and the troops without food ; but the officers remained the whole time at their posts, and encouraged the soldiers to follow their example, by assurances that General Chlopicki would not fail to accept the command.

Early in the morning, the committee of national credit issued a proclamation, placing public property under the guardianship of the people and army. This confidence pleased the multitude assembled round the Bank. “ No injury shall be done,” they shouted ; “ we desire only to beat the Muscovites.” A second official document was the order of council, by which the before-named patriots were appointed its members. It had the good effect of arresting further bloodshed amongst the Poles collected in the avenue of Cracow. Its beneficial influence, however, might have been greatly counteracted by the proclamation of the council inviting the insurgents to return to order. Fortunately, the people, dazzled by the patriot signatures attached to it, received it without suspecting its tendency. A few conspirators alone understood its import, trembled for a moment, then trod it under foot. But their attention was soon imperiously demanded elsewhere. The people had assembled by thousands round the

vice-regal palace, where the Administrative Council had been sitting since midnight, and interrupted the deliberations by their incessant shouts of "Long live General Chlopicki." Niemcewicz appeared in the balcony, and endeavoured to pacify the restless multitude, by assuring them that "the council had ordered diligent search to be made after him; but that he had disappeared like a stone in the water." Meanwhile Pac was appointed generalissimo for the next twenty-four hours. Lubecki then resolved to place the council more out of reach of the people by transferring its sittings to the Bank, under the plea of securing that building. A military escort having arrived, General Pac led the way, wearing the red cap of liberty, and, followed by the chief of his staff, Colonel Vonsowicz, carrying a cartridge box preserved since the time of Napoleon, with a numerous suite of aide-de-camps, together with all the members of the council. The procession was so much increased by the accompanying crowd, that it extended two miles in length. The march was very slow, as the aged Niemcewicz could not proceed at a quick pace. The people knew not how sufficiently to express their satisfaction at the sight of the poet, the most ancient of the surviving patriots, the companion of Kosciuszko both in his glory and captivity. "All must go well, since the venerable Niemcewicz is there," again and again they exultingly exclaimed. Such is the influence of old age, crowning a life spent in virtuous struggles. The procession,

contrary to the wish of Lubecki, only served to excite the popular enthusiasm for the insurrection, and to revolutionize the government itself. In the evening, the council, at the suggestion of Gustave Malachowski, decreed that a national guard should be formed. Lubecki, however, prevailed on the council to change this revolutionary title, for that of guard of safety, as the latter might be excused at St. Petersburg upon the simple ground of the protection of private property. A new President of Municipality, the deserving patriot Vengrzecki, was also appointed. On the same evening, the gallant general, Sierawski, arrived in Warsaw, and at once joined the insurrection. The council offered him the command of the troops, but he refused it, saying that Poland possessed another warrior more adapted to the greatness of existing circumstances. He was then named military governor of Warsaw, and by his zeal and courage raised the spirit of the insurgents. At length the long expected Chlopicki presented himself this night at the Bank. He accepted the command of the army, but only in the name of the sovereign, and not in that of the insurrection. His first act was to issue an order that all detachments of troops should remain at their posts. His name electrified the soldiers, and they considered this order as sanctioning what they had done.

Meantime the Grand Duke, ever accustomed to be informed of every thing, even down to the meanest gossip, felt much perplexed by his ignorance of what

was passing in the city. Except Zamoyski, most of his aide-de-camps had been either killed or made prisoners, and the others dared not enter the town. Even Zamoyski would no longer serve him in his former capacity. He declared to the Grand Duke that his honour commanded him to join his countrymen, and that he would not go to the city in any other character than that of a true Pole. Curiosity prevailed, and Constantine consented that Zamoyski should entertain what sentiments he pleased, provided he furnished him with news. Zamoyski, a statesman by nature, possessing profound judgment and prompt decision, used to go after news and return with proposals. He had already established unity amongst the Poles; he now wished to reconcile them to the Duke. Although he had no hope of success in the event of a contest with Russia, he still thought that the insurrection ought not to terminate without procuring important concessions to the nation. He therefore requested the Prussian Consul Schmidt, who was on intimate terms with Constantine, to inform the latter that the men then in power might be able to avert the coming storm, provided he would authorise them to ensure to the nation certain benefits of great importance; but that otherwise the insurrection would shortly swell into a torrent, which would baffle every effort to preserve the kingdom to the emperor. The word "independence alone," continued Zamoyski, "pronounced by the Grand Duke, can now become

“ a principle on which the Council of Administration can continue to rule the insurrection.” On this proposition being communicated to Constantine, he desired that he might hear it from Zamoyski himself. An interesting discussion ensued. The young Pole, in guarded phrase, told harsh truths to the brother of the most powerful monarch in the world. He said that the general indignation (against Constantine) was overwhelming—that it had given birth to the insurrection, which, owing to his inactivity, had now become so powerful that it was impossible to arrest its progress. Alluding to the men in power, Zamoyski observed, that “ Their popularity was great, and their characters noble—they were wise statesmen, and not guided by any exclusive passion. All now depended on securing the authority to them, for should the revolutionary whirlwind disperse these, the Grand Duke would soon behold in their place, men whose names were now totally unknown to him, and whose exaltation would bring affairs to a state of absolute collision.” “ Eh bien!—que voulez-vous donc que j’autorise ? ” interrupted Constantine. “ Assure the council, Monseigneur,” urged Zamoyski, “ that you believe the measures pursued by its members are the result of circumstances, and that they do not emanate from their voluntary participation in the movement ; and that you are aware that it has now become indispensable to proclaim the independence.” Although Con-



stantine had already heard the same from the Prussian Consul, these words irritated him to fury. "Comment? vous osez m'insulter aussi!" he cried, with a countenance distorted with wrath. Zamoyski, who had often exposed his life for him, and who knew that it was in his character to shrink before moral superiority, replied with dignity, "Vous voilà, Monseigneur, vous méfiant toujours des gens de bien, et ne donnant votre confiance qu'à ceux qui ne le méritent pas." The reproof, as he had often heard it before from Alexander and others, calmed him. He requested Zamoyski to explain the word "independence." The latter assured him that it did not imply disobedience—that it signified only the resolution of the nation to assume the direction of its own affairs. It had been so explained by Alexander himself and the High National Court. The nation would now understand no other word. Constantine kept repeating—"C'est la guerre—c'est la révolution," and dismissed Zamoyski with, "Allez en ville et vite; et faites ce que vous voudrez, mais rien en mon nom—je ne vous autorise à rien."

Zamoyski, knowing that Constantine might be frightened into sanctioning whatever the government should deem expedient, urged on the council the adoption of his ingenious measure, which he represented as the only means of protracting its existence. Lubecki denied this. He even considered such a measure calculated to produce war

with Russia. He was still nothing more than a Russian minister, when he said, “ that in case of “ war with Poland, the emperor would make both “ his hands bleed.”

On the 1st of December, a number of the members of the Diet sent a deputation to the government, stating that the government was not sufficiently revolutionary in its proceedings,—that some of its members did not possess the confidence of the nation,—and demanded that both chambers of the Diet should be convoked, and that some of the deputies should be admitted into the Administrative Council. The latter request was immediately complied with, and the senator Castellan Dembowski, the deputies Count Ladislaus Ostrowski, Count Gustave Malachowski, and Joachim Lelewel, were received into it as members. The council, however, expressed its astonishment on learning that Prince Lubecki had been pointed out as not possessing the national confidence. He offered to resign ; but, on the declaration of his new colleagues, that they would in that case follow his example, he renounced his intention. They still believed in his patriotism. The council then determined upon forming an executive committee, wholly composed of new members, in order to meet the pressing difficulties with fitting energy ; and Chlopicki was enjoined to summon the various corps for the protection of the capital, in case of an invasion being attempted by Constantine.

Still the government, though composed of the most distinguished patriots, and even with one conspirator, Lelewel, amongst them, was far from satisfying some of the leaders of the insurrection. Their principal objection against it was its mediative character, and its continuing to act in the name of the sovereign. On the other hand, the prospects of the insurrection became clouded. Constantine had stationed himself at the barrier of Mokotow, with his united forces, reinforced by twenty-four pieces of artillery, brought from Skierniewice, and by thus intercepting their communication with the surrounding country, kept the insurgents imprisoned in the streets of Warsaw. These and similar considerations produced a violent reaction in the minds of some of the conspirators. Too late, they perceived their error in not having at once established an insurrectionary government, and in order to find a remedy for this radical evil, and to do away with the Administrative Council they assembled late in the evening at the Hall of Municipality. Their warlike appearance at such an unusual hour displeased the old president Vengrzecki. "What brings you here?" he loudly demanded.--- In a yet louder tone, the rash, but highly gifted youth, Maurice Mochnacki, replied,—“The conduct  
“ of the government, which, by continuing to act in  
“ the name of Nicholas, compels all true patriots to  
“ combine in endeavouring to avert the dangers  
“ which threaten the national cause.” “In the  
“ council sit men possessing the national confidence,”

rejoined Vengrzecki, "you come here to propagate dissension, whilst we need union."—"Yes, those men are honest patriots," resumed Moch-nacki, "men as well deserving of their country as yourself, but weak old men who allow themselves to be betrayed by the partisans of Russia, and so mislead the nation that trusts them." At this insult to old age Vengrzecki burst into tears. They then formed themselves into a society, to which they gave the name of the Patriotic Club; elected Lelewel, though absent, their president, and Xavier Brokowski vice-president; and appointed their next meeting to take place in the assembly rooms, close to the Royal Theatre.

On the 2nd of December, the Grand Duke desired an interview with a deputation from the council; Prince Czartoryski, Prince Lubecki, Ladislaus Ostrowski, and Lelewel, were in consequence appointed to attend him. No sooner was this known in the city, than thousands gathered round the Bank, and endeavoured to stop their carriage. Preceded by Zamoyski on horseback, they advanced with great difficulty. On reaching Constantine's quarters, Zamoyski, wishing to impress him favourably in their behalf, told him, that "their lives had been endangered, that they could not give the throne a greater proof of their loyalty." "*Il ne faut pas faire attendre ces messieurs Ladislaus,*" replied the Czarewitch with unwonted mildness. "Without any

“ previous parley,” so writes Lelewel, “ or any escort,  
 “ delegates passed through the Russian troops,  
 “ and were admitted into the presence of Constan-  
 “ tine. After a night spent in the open air, under  
 “ the trees, a small room in an inn was now the  
 “ refuge of the Grand Duke and Duchess. It had  
 “ but one small window, and was furnished with  
 “ a bed, a mock sofa, a small table, and a chair.  
 “ On the table were two plates, for it was three  
 “ o’clock in the afternoon, and their hour of dining.  
 “ The chamber was so filled by the delegates,  
 “ that there was scarcely room to move.—It is  
 “ difficult to say, whether the tyrant receiving  
 “ them in this situation, or their presence in  
 “ his camp, was most to be marvelled at.” The con-  
 ference lasted five hours. Constantine’s first ques-  
 tion was, “ What would satisfy the people ? ”—The  
 Russian troops being marched into Russia, replied  
 Ostrowski. What am I to do ? Shall I go or stay ?  
 was the next question. Lubecki advised him to stay.  
 Prince Czartoryski was about to make some observa-  
 tions on this point, when Constantine requested him  
 to say simply yes or no, “ oui ou non.” It was then  
 formally put to the vote. Both Princes voted for  
 his remaining, but Ostrowski and Lelewel opposed  
 it, and Constantine followed their advice. The  
 delegates next represented that the reunion of  
 the sister countries was a *sine qua non* for pacifi-  
 cation. Constantine was pleased to hear this, as it

furnished a pretext for saying that not his oppressive administration, but the desire of the Poles to act as an independent nation had caused the revolt: he, therefore, adopted the proposition with much warmth. “ Il faudrait qu’un Polonais fut un juif pour ne pas demander la réunion des provinces ; et vous savez que depuis long-tems je la demande moi-même,” said he. He also promised not to attack Warsaw ; and in case of his being ordered to do so, to give forty-eight hours previous notice of it to the council, and insisted upon similar terms on the part of the Poles. Ostrowski declared such reciprocity of terms to be impossible, as no one could be answerable for the results of popular excitement. Finally, Constantine introduced the subject of amnesty, which he offered to procure to those who would confess their errors. The delegates replied with one voice, that such an amnesty would be a mockery. The Grand Duke then emphatically observed, that when he called crimes, errors, he showed the greatest possible indulgence towards the guilty. “ There are no guilty,” retorted Ostrowski, pointing to his sword ; and this apostrophe, added to the intelligence that a revolutionary club had been formed under the presidency of Lelewel, had such an effect upon Constantine, that he entered into a solemn engagement to do his utmost to procure an act of general clemency.

Meantime a storm was gathering in the city which threatened the government. The leaders of the Patriotic Club had succeeded in collecting about a

thousand persons, military and civil, with whom the assembly rooms had been crowded since two o'clock, whilst multitudes of armed persons gathered around. Towards night the sitting commenced. A few dim lamps scattered through the vast chambers, scarcely served to render visible the corpse-pale countenances of the conspirators, exhausted by a protracted vigil, by toil and anxiety. They were all armed, and looked like the phantoms of a dream. A table served for the tribune. Bronikowski presided amidst deep silence. Mochnacki mounted the table ; his speech was violent, and full of invectives against the moderation of the government. Each word uttered against tyranny, against the omnipotent Czar, before whom all from the Neva to the Vistula trembled, was deemed an act of heroism, and welcomed by tremendous cheers, by grounding muskets, and clashing swords. The principal theme of Mochnacki's discourse was the necessity of disarming the Russian troops, and making Constantine prisoner. The deliberation was short, and the following resolutions were passed.

1st. That General Chlopicki should attack the enemy ; 2nd. The insurrection should be organized throughout the country ; 3rd. All the ministers should be placed under arrest till further arrangements could be made ; 4th. The wives of Russian officers should be prohibited from corresponding with their husbands ; 5th. Negotiations should be opened only with St. Petersburg, and that Constantine should



guarantee them ; 6th. That commanding officers of Polish troops, who had not yet joined the insurrection, should be declared guilty of high treason, with the reserve, however, that General Chlopicki should first inform them of this decision with the least possible delay ; 7th. In case of these resolutions not being at once carried into effect, the government should accept as its members such persons as the club should designate. A deputation of twelve, with Bronikowski at their head, then proceeded with them to the Bank, followed by the armed multitude. It was then nine o'clock, and the other deputation had just returned from Constantine. The delegates of the club had to wait a full hour before they were admitted into the council. They entered with their muskets. Some of the members were filled with consternation, others were indignant, and Lelewel gnashed his teeth with vexation at the conduct of the clubbists, by which he, as their president, was compromised in the opinion of his colleagues. Prince Czartoryski first interrupted the general silence, and replied with his usual mildness to the communications then made by the delegates, observing that some of the measures proposed by them, such as the arrest of Constantine, were no longer practicable, in consequence of the convention just concluded. Mochmacki, in whose opinion this convention was highly dishonourable, and who thought that Constantine ought to be made to beg on his knees for mercy, exclaimed, shaking his musket : “ Prince, you are jesting ; we rose to deliver

“ Poland, not to accept conditions from the Grand  
“ Duke, who is a prisoner of the insurrection. Let  
“ the government no longer persist in acting this  
“ comedy, which may terminate tragically either for  
“ the insurrection, or its enemies and doubtful par-  
“ tisans,” alluding to Lubecki. His address excited  
the indignation of all the members. Chlopicki left  
the hall in a fury, Malachowski and Prince Radziwill  
tendered their resignation; Lelewel was silent. The  
venerable Niemcewicz bared his breast, exclaiming,  
“ Strike this heart, which has ever beat for the  
“ fatherland; murder us, since you come here with  
“ arms, since you mistrust conscience and honourable  
“ old age.” Prince Czartoryski and Ostrowski alone  
endeavoured to appease the clubbists, promising to  
take their proposals into consideration. So ended  
this Jacobinical orgie, as the visit of the clubbists to  
the Bank has since been stigmatized.

About three o'clock in the morning, General Szembek arrived in Warsaw with one regiment of the line, nor could the threats or the prayers of the Grand Duke avail against his ardour to join the insurgents. In two days, he had marched seventy miles, sending invitations on his way to other generals to follow his example, and was now conducted triumphantly into the city by Colonel Kicki, and the ever-watchful youths of the University. Chlopicki too went out to meet him. The presence of this general acted, as it invariably did, like magic on the soldiers. They greeted him again and again,

with long, loud, hearty cheers, “ Long live Chlo-  
“ picki! Long live the Fatherland!” Szembek  
hastened to tender his allegiance to the Government.  
“ I have done my duty as a Pole, and as a soldier, I  
“ come to unite with you—I am ready with my  
“ soldiers to shed my blood for Poland.” He was  
believed, for there is a proverb, “ Trust Szembek,  
“ he will not betray you.” The tumult roused  
the citizens, as well as the clubbists, who, impatient  
to learn the result of their proposals to the Govern-  
ment, met before day-break, in the hope that, after  
their late proceeding, Lelewel would join them in  
seizing the reins of power. He now appeared  
amongst them for the first time, but his very first  
words were a death-blow to the hopes they had  
conceived of him; for he counselled moderation.  
Lelewel is not a man of action. A great revolu-  
tionary crisis does not warm his blood, nor inspire  
his soul, grown stagnant and withered by his long  
seclusion from all commerce, save that of old  
books. As events become colossal, he dwindles  
before them. His greatest talent is for conspiracy.  
During fifteen years, in which he had been a member  
of every secret society, he had contrived to avoid all  
persecution in consequence. Whilst professor at  
Vilno, he converted all the students into ardent  
patriots, implacable conspirators against the yoke  
of the stranger. The Lithuanian corps overflowed  
with his pupils. All his historical writings are but  
ingenious and masterly plots against tyranny, either

real or imaginary. Born and grown old, under the suspended knout, Lelewel has a sort of Robespierism in his character. He is never the first to give an opinion, but when others have manifested theirs he either keeps silence, or pronounces some words of manifold meaning, often unintelligible, and thus seems to agree with his associates. This caution is partly owing to his pretensions to infallibility—which, rather than put to stake, he will abstain from speaking. True to his character, he now coquetted with the insurrection—was present in the council, and the club, was present everywhere,—that is, he was no where. The spirits of the club, damped by his ominous words, revived at the appearance of Szembek. Borne into the assembly in the arms of the members, he jumped upon the table, and repeated what he had said at the Bank: “I am only a soldier, “I know not how to speak, but I will shed, with “my soldiers, the last drop of blood for the father-“land.” The club-rooms proving too small to contain such an immense concourse, the assembly went into the open air. Szembek, addressing the people from a cart, assured them of the arival of his regiment, and was answered by the usual shouts, “Long live Szembek! Death to the Muscovites!” Other individuals also spoke, and veteran warriors told of the battles fought for the fatherland, and of the hideousness of despotism, calling on Heaven to bear witness to their words. No message arriving from the government, some encouraged the crowd

to proceed to the Bank. Great numbers were already on their way, when the appearance on the waggon of an aged warrior, dressed in furs, and wearing immense moustaches, arrested their attention. "Nothing will avail," cried Kuszel, "if we do not march straight into Lithuania." These words spoken at random, but embodying the secret of Poland's existence, decided the people. The universal cry, "Let us go to Lithuania! Let us deliver our brethren!" rose to the sky, just as Ladislaus Ostrowski arrived with the decision of the government. The council, desirous of uniting all parties, had resolved to accept the following clubbists as members: Maurice Mochnacki, Xavier Bronickowski, and Major Machnicki, and the resolution was immediately acted upon.

Constantine, fearful lest the convention of the preceding day might not be ratified by the government, sent Zamoyski into Warsaw, to ascertain the state of affairs. On his way, he learnt that the Polish troops, still with Constantine, had determined to leave him, and join their insurgent brethren. He urged them to defer the execution of their project until he should bring them a solemn permission from Constantine to do so; thinking, that should the insurrection prosper, it would then be time enough for the troops to declare themselves; and if not, that it would be best for the nation that the whole army should not be compromised. He found the government in great disorder, owing to the late

intrusion. Many were speaking at the same time. Lubecki took him aside, and gave him a letter, informing Constantine that the very idea of negotiations exposed the Council to great danger from the clubbists, and that no alternative remained for him but to fly, or surrender himself. Meanwhile thousands of armed citizens, excited by a report purposely spread by the clubbists, that Constantine was forcibly detaining the Polish troops, advanced, with Szembek's regiment, towards the Mokotow barrier. The immense crowds, by their mass and weight, actually forced Chlopicki to move forward, who thus placed, for the first time, at the head of such an army, gnashed his teeth with impatience. Zamoyski, on meeting the procession, conjured Chlopicki, if possible, still to delay the attack, again pledging himself to bring Constantine's permission for the Polish troops to join their brethren, or, in case of his refusing it, to return himself at their head. Chlopicki allowed him half an hour for the purpose, avowing his inability to restrain the mob for a longer time. On Zamoyski presenting Lubecki's letter, Constantine was astonished to find that it had no signature\*. "How is this?" he exclaimed.—"It shows the state of the Council," replied Zamoyski, and eagerly urged him to dismiss the Polish troops,

\* Lubecki told afterwards Zamoyski, that he had purposely omitted signing it, as the letter would be deemed a crime, both by the club and the autocrat ; each party from its respective motives.

in consideration of their loyalty and honourable conduct, as well as for his own personal safety.”—  
“ But what do they offer me in return?” asked Constantine.—“ Nothing,” said Zamoyski.—“ You  
“ must fly, for every man and soldier in the city is  
“ on the march to attack you. Nor does there  
“ remain a moment for your escape beyond the time  
“ it will take the people to welcome the troops.”  
The Princess Lowicka reproved Zamoyski for urging her husband to a step of such responsibility.—“ Son  
“ honneur le lui defend,” she added.—“ Son salut,  
“ sa sécurité l’exige,” retorted Zamoyski.—At length Constantine pronounced these words—“ Go, and say  
“ that I permit them to join their comrades.” The Princess enjoined Zamoyski not to use any words but those of permission only, as the Duke neither *ordered* nor *authorised*. Her subtle logic awakened anxiety in Constantine, lest Zamoyski should overstep his orders. He therefore wrote the following letter:—“ Je permets aux troupes Polonaises, qui  
“ sont restées fidèles jusqu’au dernier moment auprès  
“ de moi, de rejoindre les leurs. Je me mets en  
“ marche avec les troupes impériales pour m’éloi-  
“ gner de la capitale, et j’espère de la loyauté Polo-  
“ naise qu’elles ne seront pas inquiétées dans leur  
“ mouvement pour rejoindre l’empire. Je recom-  
“ mande de même tous les établissements, propriétés,  
“ et individus à la protection de la nation Polonaise,  
“ et les mets sous la sauvegarde de la foi la plus  
“ sacrée.” He then dismissed Zamoyski with “ Je



“ n’ai plus d’ordres à vous donner. Vous avez des devoirs à remplir—adieu.” Zamoyiski hurried away with the letter, taking leave of the Russian officers, with “ à revoir, Messieurs — peut-être sur un champ de bataille.”—But he did not find the troops. Without waiting for permission, they had already joined their brethren in the avenue of Cracow. The meeting was a striking scene. Shame and humiliation contrasted in the countenances of the chasseurs, with the heartfelt welcome of the people. Not a soul but came out to meet them. All the houses were opened for the first time since the insurrection. The lovely women of Warsaw, hitherto terror-struck, now waved their handkerchiefs from the windows; the national standards, wreathed with evergreens, floated aloft in the streets. Citizens rushed amongst the troops, broke their ranks, and embraced the soldiers with tears of joy. Military music resounded through the city, amidst incessant cheers, and cries of “ Long live the Polish army.” These patriotic rejoicings had, however, nearly ended tragically. Two generals, Vincent Krasinski and Kurnatowski, who had charged the populace at the head of the chasseurs, had the temerity to return with them. The procession had already approached the Bank, when suddenly cries of “ Death to the traitors,” arose on all sides. They were dragged from their horses, and many swords were pointed at their breasts. Chlopicki and Szembek, however, succeeded in carrying them off to the Bank, but not in

disarming the anger of the people. While these were preparing for the assault, Colonel Lach Szyrma, with his academical legion, arrived, and entering, accompanied by two standard-bearers, the interior of the palace, appeared with the obnoxious generals on the balcony, and the national flags unfurled on either side. On his motioning to silence, the vociferation ceased, and pointing with his sword to the national emblems, he dictated aloud an oath of fidelity to both generals, by which they swore to shed their blood as private soldiers for the country. Their solemn declaration appeased the people, infuriated by their presence—that noble people who hold in horror “the French spirit”—namely, “*émeute*,” and “civil blood-shed.” The rejoicings of the day were protracted through the night. The city was illuminated, and on many houses shone inscribed the well known lines of Mickiewicz, “Hail to thee, Aurora of freedom! The sun of salvation will follow thee.” It was a scene of enchantment. Bonfires were kindled in all the streets, around which the soldiers warmed themselves. Military music played, whilst groups of both sexes, singing the national songs, paraded the streets. Still more deeply interesting was the spectacle of the academical legion, patrolling, when the rest retired, uttering, as their watchwords, the hallowed names of Poland, liberty, independence, Kosciuszko, Chlopicki, &c.

Meantime the government was fast drawing to another revolution within itself. Maurice Mochnacki

having declared his determination not to join it until Lubecki should be dismissed, the latter, in consequence, resigned. His example was imitated by all the other ministers. Thus the Council of Administration was dissolved *de facto*. Its new members, however, continued to attend to the most important and urgent points, delaying till the next day the organization of a new government. On the other hand, Mochnacki, overjoyed at the success of his audacity, confidently hoped to consummate the ruin of the present one. The club held a meeting that evening, which was numerously attended, but under auspices very different from those on former occasions. The return of the troops, and Constantine's flight, had removed all fear of the enemy, and all suspicion of the patriots in power. Concord, unity, were the watchword, and woe to him who should dare to doubt. Mochnacki mistook the temper of the assembly, when he thus addressed them:—"Gentlemen! I bring you ill news. Your demands have been ineffectual. It is true the Council is dissolved, but I think the new government will prove no better. The Czarewitch retires unmoled. Men, acknowledged patriots do not arrest his march. Friends of liberty have allied themselves with our enemies. Let us not trust men for their historic names. Let us not trust in fame or reputed merit. General Chlopicki does not fulfil his duty." After a pause, occasioned by loud and general hisses, the speaker continued:—

“ Gentlemen ! Chlopicki betrays the insurrection.  
“ I came here to announce that I have refused to  
“ take any part in a government which hurls the  
“ nation into the abyss of destruction. Let us  
“ complete what we have begun. Let us go  
“ again—let us all go with arms in our hands, and  
“ proclaim a revolutionary power.” At these words  
the indignation of the assembly burst forth. Threats  
of death were vociferated against Mochnacki from  
every quarter. Still he did not lose courage. Again  
jumping on the table, and shaking his musket, he  
strove to silence the hisses and clashing of arms, and  
to vindicate his treasonable words. But in vain.  
He was dragged down, and many swords were  
pointed at his breast. Tranquillity being restored  
for a moment, the Vice-President, Bronikowski, who  
was also a member of the Council, was called upon  
to declare, upon his honour, whether the government  
acted in the spirit of the insurrection. His answer  
decided Mochnacki’s fate. All present rose against  
him, and he would have been cut to pieces but for  
the exertions of his friends, who facilitated his  
escape. “ Slanderer, terrorist, the Polish Robes-  
“ pierre,” were the opprobrious epithets lavished  
upon him. Other clubbists were then expelled, and  
an end was thus put to the existence of the society,  
amidst remonstrances and threats against the exalta-  
does. Still Mochnacki could not believe himself  
vanquished. Early in the morning, December 4th,

he betook himself to the ensigns, and represented to them that their first glorious effort would but bring ruin on the country, if they should persist in not taking the power into their own hands—that Chlopicki was betraying the hopes of the nation—that Lubecki employed the credit of Czartoryski and Niemcewicz to the prejudice of the insurrection, and that to avert so much evil they must follow him to the Bank. The young warriors loaded their muskets, and set off with him. On the way Mochnacki reiterated his previous argument—“that not only  
“dead men could no longer make deceiving speeches,  
“but, more important still, they could make no  
“blunders, nor precipitate their country into a  
“political grave.” The bloody theory was about to be acted upon. They were already near the Bank, when they met Wysocki, their beloved chief. He endeavoured to dissuade them from their meditated violence. “Whom,” he asked, “shall we esteem,  
“if not those who acted with Lubecki? I know  
“that all has not been well done—the fault is ours,  
“and now we cannot repair it without much blood-  
“shed.” The ensigns professed the highest respect for Wysocki, yet they hesitated between him and Mochnacki, and looked anxiously towards the Bank. The latter then whispered to Wysocki—“Let us  
“but blow out the brains of one financier, and the  
“others will be less stubborn.” At these words, Wysocki knelt before his pupils, exclaiming—“Only

“ over my lifeless body shall you march to the Bank.” His firmness prevailed, and they returned to their post.

On the other hand, the capital was plunged in grief by the illness of Chlopicki. The idea of having been called a traitor in the club, struck like a thunderbolt through his powerful frame. The insubordination, too apparent in the army, also conspired to agitate him, accustomed as he had been from his youth to the discipline of a camp. He was seized with apoplexy. Black curtains in the windows announced his danger. The deep sorrow of one portion of the people, the unbounded indignation of the other, portended mischief. “ Death to Mochnacki,” cried the multitude, assembled round the residence of the suffering warrior, and then dispersed in search of the offender, for whom gibbets were already erected in several parts of the city. The Garde d’Honneur proclaimed him an unworthy son of Poland, struck off his name from their list, and sent an address to the hero of their hearts and imaginations, with expressions of regret, and asseverations, that they would plunge their swords in the bosom of every wretch bold enough to insult the saviour of the country. Mochnacki could nowhere find refuge but in the residence of Lubecki, his intended victim. From his youth a prison had been his residence. There he learned his convulsive hatred of a foreign yoke. To meditate on the means of breaking it, was the poetry of his

wild life, soon consumed by the yet fiercer fever of action.

On the 4th of December, Prince Czartoryski, the Castellan Kochanowski, General Pac, Niemcewicz, Lelewel, and the deputies Dembowski and Ostrowski, proclaimed themselves the Provisional Government of the kingdom. They justified their act on the grounds that the late Administrative Council had proved unequal to continue the government of the country in its present extraordinary situation ; and that the absence of the king, residing at St. Petersburg, incapacitated him from meeting the exigencies of the moment. But still, uncertain as to the impression that might be produced in the country by the insurrection, as well as from considerations of state prudence, they announced themselves constituted in the name of the sovereign. The idea, which first originated with Lubecki, and was then embodied by Lelewel, " Let the constitutional king carry " on war with the absolute autocrat," was the fundamental principle of this Provisional Government ; or, in other words, the unsuccessful opposition of the Diet was transferred to the field. In accordance with this system, they took measures calculated to render it triumphant, and which at once insurrectionized the country. They summoned to arms the whole male population, from eighteen to forty-five years of age, in order to form a guard of safety ; and military exercises were ordered to be practised twice in the week, under the inspec-



tion of able officers. In the space of forty-eight hours all the country rung with this important measure. It was throwing down the glove, assuming a gesture, and uttering a voice of power, intended to tell the Autocrat, that from the ranks of that guard of safety might spring up regiments able to enforce any demand of the constitutional king. The next step was to recall into service all the disbanded soldiers and officers, and to confer on General Chlopicki the supreme command of the army, and of all the insurrectionary forces, which term now appeared for the first time in the official acts. To carry the armament into effect with the more energy, municipal corporations were immediately instituted. “Poles!” said the accompanying proclamation, “the moment has arrived when the whole national force must be brought into action for the defence of the national liberties. Let him in whom Polish blood flows, spare neither wealth nor health, nor life—let him hasten to the national standard, lest he be outrun in the noble career of self-devotion. The nation with the army, and the army with the nation! Energy and union shall ensure success. God will help the righteous cause!” The Palatinate Councils were summoned for the 15th of December, in order to enlighten the government respecting the wishes of the public; and the Diet for the 18th of December, to pronounce on the conditions of its continued existence.

The appeal of Constantine to Polish loyalty, proved beneficial to both parties. It enabled him to pursue in safety his retreat into Russia, as the Poles were proud to boast that he had at length done justice to their generous nature ; whilst it facilitated the access of Polish troops to the insurrection, and compelled the Russians to surrender the fortresses of Zamosc and Modlin. The latter capitulated to Colonel Kicki, and was a valuable acquisition, as it contained seven millions of cartridges. He then resolved to attempt his long-cherished scheme, of attacking Constantine with a body of volunteers, in order to bring him prisoner to Warsaw. Anxious lest his victim should escape, the colonel was rapidly driving back, when his carriage was overturned, and his leg broken. Some fatality seemed to attend the destiny of Poland's scourge. Stanislaus Potocki was the first who fell a victim to his zeal in saving Constantine ; the two Generals, Krasinski and Kurnatowski, were with difficulty rescued by Lach Szyrma from a similar catastrophe ; and Mochnecki was very near being hanged for attempting that for which Colonel Kicki thus atoned. Poison, administered by a Russian, was to end the career of the brother of the Russian autocrat. No prince was ever murdered by the Poles.

His illness continuing, Chlopicki, on the morning of the 5th of December, sent in his resignation, an act which was loudly deplored by the citizens.

The illustrious sufferer of the insurrection now grew into a colossus, the removal of which portended a catastrophe. The remonstrances of the Provisional Government having failed to change his determination, Prince Czartoryski, Niemcewicz, and Zamoyski, were deputed to visit him. They besought him not to abandon the cause, and on his reiterated refusal, the aged Niemcewicz, who had witnessed the self-devotion of Kosciuszko, burst into tears. At length Chlopicki abruptly exclaimed—  
“ Well, then ! I comply with your request ; but I  
“ assume a dictatorial power, for without it, I cannot  
“ enforce military subordination” The delegates, supposing he meant merely a military dictatorship, made no objection ; and Zamoyski was so rejoiced that he actually threw himself at his feet. “ I take the Dictatorship,” repeated Chlopicki ;  
“ but, Gentlemen, this must remain private, and let  
“ Niemcewicz write for me an address to the army.”

The women of Poland, like those of ancient Rome, have been the instigators of many a glorious event, although, since the days of Eve and Pandora, the interference of the sex in state affairs, has, on the whole, rather tended to evil than good. Chlopicki had passed the previous evening at the house of Madame Vonsowicz, where allusion having been made to the intention of government to invest him with absolute power, that lady observed, “ that absolute power was a thing *to be taken, not given.*” Chlopicki was already, by popular consent, Dictator

*de facto*. It is more than probable that this subtle remark seized on his perplexed imagination, and decided his conduct. On returning home, he summoned the Generals Krukowiecki and Szembek, and Colonel Skrzynecki, to come to him at eleven the next morning. They accordingly made their appearance just after the delegates had retired, and having answered for the obedience of all within the city, received his orders to bring their respective troops to the Field of Mars (Grande Place d'Armes), at two o'clock in the afternoon.

In the meantime Prince Czartoryski and Niemcewicz, on their return to the Bank, being apprehensive that Chlopicki might contemplate something more than a mere military dictatorship, caused his nomination to be made out and sent to him, signed by all the members of the Provisional Government, and investing him with unlimited authority over the army. Chlopicki was enraged. He inveighed against the bad faith, as he termed it, of the delegates in betraying his secret. Infatuated by the suggestion of Madame Vonsowicz, the very idea of being nominated, which implied a power superior to his own, was intolerable to him. Burning with resentment, pouring forth a torrent of invectives, and followed by a numerous staff, he repaired to the Bank, entered the presence of the members, tore the paper before their eyes, and, striking on the table with his fist, told them in accents of thunder, that he needed no nomination, but that he enjoined them the strictest

obedience to his will, and then immediately quitting their presence, galloped to the Campus Martius. It was three o'clock. The shouts of the impatient populace rose in the air, as they saw the man approach, whose colossal stature, martial aspect, and eagle eye, bespoke a hero, who, with iron grasp, seized on the reigns of power, for the prostration of their giant foe. Welcomed by cheers and music, he first addressed the ensigns, eulogized their heroism, and promised them an honourable distinction. He then spoke to the people and the army, testified his satisfaction at their fervent love of liberty, urged the necessity of establishing a powerful government, and finished by announcing himself Dictator, and asking whether they approved the act. The universal cry of "Long live the Dictator," put their sentiments beyond all doubt. He assured them that he would not abuse his power, but would resign it in due time into the hands of the Diet; and then uncovering his head, exclaimed, with devotional reverence, "Long live the Fatherland!" It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm of the people at that magic word. This step filled the capital with joy—joy such as had not been felt in any part of Poland for at least half a century. From this concentration of the executive power they exultingly anticipated war with Russia, a glorious war for national independence. The morning of the 5th of December dawned in uncertainty of the fate of Poland—the evening closed joyfully as a wedding banquet. The national theatre

was opened for the first time since the insurrection. The audience was immense. At the sight of the Polish and Lithuanian banners, the enthusiasm was unbounded. They were hailed as a symbol of the Dictatorship, promising the reunion of the sister countries. The performers clustering round them, chaunted a solemn national hymn. The public joined in the chorus, and sang with the performers the concluding words of the strophe: "To arms, " Poles !" A patriotic play long since prohibited. "The Cracovians and the Highlanders," followed, after which the orchestra revived the hitherto forbidden melodies: the stately polonaise of Kosciuszko, the solemn march of Dombrowski, and the famous mazourka of the Polish legions in Italy. Just then the curtain fell, and the performers advancing to dance the mazourka, the sight inspired the pit, and in an instant every body joined. All distinctions were laid aside: patriotism equalized all. Two grave senators gave the example, and officers, soldiers, ensigns, academical guards, professors, deputies, high-bred ladies, all partook in the rejoicing, continuing the air with their voices, when the orchestra gave over from fatigue. With such expansion of feeling did the citizens of Warsaw welcome the dictatorship.

The enthusiastic satisfaction with which the Poles, stigmatized by historians, for their unlimited love of liberty, and even of licence, welcomed the absolutism of a soldier,—thus scattering to the winds their new-

born freedom, and bending their necks to another yoke, when they had yet scarcely shaken off the old one, is worthy of serious consideration. In modern times, the Polish nation has had two important epochs. The Constitution of the 3rd of May, 1791, was one great result of national reflection, when the nobility, casting from them their pride of ages, admitted into their rank the inhabitants of towns, in order gradually to extend equality of rights to all. On the present occasion, the Polish people showed equal wisdom, when they sanctioned with rejoicings the military dictatorship. A Polish insurrection is indeed an affair of arms ; it can only breathe under the coat of mail, advance to the roar of cannon, and be guided by a helmed head. The dictatorship was, besides, a rule of war with Russia. A war with the Autocrat of all the Russias, called for a corresponding force on the antagonistic part. Poland met the difficulty, and opposed to the sublime of despotism, the sublimer obedience to a single soldier. Politically considered, the establishment of this power did not declare Poland to be either a monarchy or a republic, and thus she could give no umbrage to her neighbours. This negative form was as consonant to good policy as to the actual state of things. Poland had as yet no independent existence, and could not, therefore, yet assume a political name, but retained the liberty to select hereafter that which might prove best adapted to subsequent events. In a social point of view, also, the dictatorship was



the very form best calculated to repress for the moment all internal dissension, and to concentrate the whole strength of the people upon the great object of their sufferings and sacrifices—the accomplishment of their independence. How far Chlopicki realized the idea of the Dictatorship remains to be seen.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *The first Period of the Dictatorship.*

ON the 6th of December, Chlopicki issued a proclamation, which embodied his system of policy. In his opinion, the insurrection was only a most legitimate revolt, to subside as soon as the abuses that brought it on should be remedied, and the Poles were to continue faithful to the emperor. The constitutional liberties of a small portion, not the independence of all Poland, formed the groundwork of the soldier's political aspirations. Such a system was contrary to sound policy, as the constitutional liberties of the kingdom, depending on autocratic Russia, were but an illusion which could not be realized without extending them to the sister countries. But no one penetrated the true meaning of Chlopicki's manifesto, so dazzled were all by the name of the dictatorship, which was considered as the earnest of immediate war with Russia. This fatal misunderstanding between the nation and the directing power, characterised all the first period of the dictatorship.—Chlopicki, the descendant of a noble, but poor, Lithuanian family, had spent the greater part of his life in the camp, beginning his

military career under Kosciuszko, and subsequently fighting in Italy, under General Dombrowski, and in Spain, where Mina and Palafox were his unsuccessful antagonists. His conduct at the siege of Saragossa, where, with a small detachment of troops, he carried a very difficult post, surprised a French officer into exclaiming, "Great God! how happened it that Poland fell, possessing such brave sons!" Marshal Suchet, in his memoirs, calls him "the bravest of the brave." In the campaign of 1812 against Russia, he commanded a division in Napoleon's army, and was severely wounded at the assault on Smolensk. On the establishment of the kingdom, he refused to serve under the capricious Constantine, and retired into private life; nor could the staff of Russian field-marshal, nor the Emperor Alexander's promises of the highest distinctions, induce him to alter his resolution. The great, though perhaps, negative merit of being neither to be bribed nor terrified into becoming, like many others, the oppressor of his countrymen, gained him the respect of the nation, and made him at once the hero of the insurrection. Though sixty years of age, he still enjoyed all the vigour of manhood.

It had been the endeavour of Prince Czartoryski, to insurrectionize the formed administration, by absorbing into it all the revolutionary fervour, energy, and capacity, and he had in a great degree succeeded in his object. Chlopicki's

system tended to anarchize the absolute power he had usurped. He who had witnessed the telegraphic administration of the French Convention, and the yet more energetic prefectorial organization of Napoleon's government, could scarcely understand that the dictatorship admitted no other distinction than that of command and blind obedience. But he soon shrunk under the vastness of the charge he had assumed, and hastened to divide it with others. The Provisional Government, with the exception of Lelewel, who was appointed minister of public instruction, was left unchanged, to enforce the execution of the Dictator's commands, to prepare new measures for his sanction, and to watch over the public functionaries. Independent of the Provisional Government, were his ministers, or rather vice-ministers, as Chlopicki, to preserve, as far as possible, the *status quo*, had not dismissed, but only suspended the former ministers from the exercise of their functions. These vice-ministers, as well as the government, were to communicate with the Dictator through the medium of his secretary, a sort of ministerial secretary of state. On the whole, the much complicated representative system, in lieu of being simplified and assimilated, as much as possible to the autocratism of Russia, was but rendered more weak and disjointed by the creation of useless functionaries.

The insurrection was born without a head, and Lubecki paralyzed it by giving it a diplomatic one.

But what was then the exigency of the moment, became, under Chlopicki, a permanent system. On the 7th December he dispatched Zamoyski to announce to General Rosen, the commander of the Lithuanian corps, that a deputation being now about to proceed to St. Petersburg, the Dictator would hold him responsible for all the innocent blood that might be shed by his instrumentality. Rosen, in his reply, gave him to understand that he had not received any orders to attack the Poles, which answer tended to confirm the confidence Chlopicki placed in the efficacy of negotiation. Lubecki, whose want of patriotic ardour was sometimes compensated by incomparable sagacity, had frequently said before the groups of the curious who surrounded him at the Bank; “A war with Russia is not necessary. Alexander was sincere in his intention of re-uniting the sister countries. Nicholas will realize this great idea, advantageous also to Russia herself. He will proclaim himself king of all Poland—do you comprehend me? *of all Poland.* The friendship of Austria is doubtful. Prussia may be indemnified in the west, and Poland and Russia united may then dictate to the world.” When asked “where was the guarantee that the Czar would act thus?” “The guarantee,” he replied, “is in a wise policy. Let no time be lost—we have money, arms, and troops. Let us arm yet more extensively, and let us do so quickly. Negotiations are best prosecuted sword in hand. I do

“ not, however, consider a war as probable. We  
“ have permitted the Grand Duke to retire honour-  
“ ably—he *loves us*, and will be our mediator with the  
“ emperor. I shall myself go to St. Petersburg.  
“ No one could obtain more than I can from the  
“ emperor. Were my head to lack arguments, I  
“ would draw them from the soles of my shoes” (his  
favourite phrase), “ *and bring you the sister coun-*  
“ *tries as a new year’s gift.*” So spoke the wily  
Russian minister, when he thought that the insur-  
rection was at his disposal, to be developed only so  
far as he should deem expedient. But on discover-  
ing that the nation welcomed the dictatorship as the  
fittest means of carrying on war with Russia, he  
entirely lost confidence in his system of half insur-  
rection ; and if he consented, at Chlopicki’s request,  
to go as envoy to St. Petersburg, it was rather  
through fear lest he should have to answer with his  
head for the mischief he had already done to the  
cause. Prince Czartoryski also looked upon nego-  
ciation as useless, knowing the Russian cabinet to  
be ever averse to concession ; and if he did not  
entirely oppose the attempt, it was in order that the  
rest of Europe might be convinced, by this step,  
that the Poles had no objection to an amicable  
arrangement ; and he still urged the Dictator to act  
as though no negotiations were pending. But  
what was only a trifling episode in his policy,  
formed the very essence of Chlopicki’s. The  
deputy Stanislaus Jezierski was appointed to

accompany Lubecki, Count Ladislaus Ostrowski having refused, from considerations of the unpopularity and impolicy of the diplomatic mission. A long list of grievances to be presented to the emperor, was prepared by the government; and Chlopicki also addressed a letter to him, in which he made the following demands as a *sine qua non* of pacification. 1st. That the Constitutional Charter should receive such guarantees as would, for the future, remove all possibility of its being violated; 2nd. That Russian troops should not thenceforth be garrisoned in Poland; 3rd. That permission should be given for the organization of a national militia like that of Prussia, but on a larger scale; and, finally, that the sister-countries should be made partakers in the constitutional liberties, according to the treaty of Vienna. Furnished with these documents, Prince Lubecki and Jezierski left Warsaw for St. Petersburg on the 10th of December.

The undisturbed march of Constantine to Russia, formed a portion of the conditions. He moved off very slowly, and did not cross the frontier till the 13th. The generosity shown him by the Poles, was much commended throughout Europe. Besides eight thousand of the best troops, and forty cannon, permitted to escape, they lost, in the person of Constantine, a most valuable hostage. Mochnacki would have detained him, to throw his head into the Russian camp, as the Romans did that of Hamilcar into the Carthaginian, in case of Nicholas rejecting



the conditions. Other considerations rendered his detention politically important to the insurrection. He had been prevailed upon by Alexander to resign his right of primogeniture in favour of Nicholas. This had given birth to a report, much believed in the remoter parts of Russia, that his resignation was the result of compulsion. His second solemn abdication, on the accession of Nicholas, strengthened it in the opinion of the Muscovites, who detested, not less than he did himself, the system of foreignism prevailing in Russia ; and this rendered him very popular amongst them. The Poles might therefore have given out that he was, or at least would be Czar, and two Czars would have much facilitated the arrangement of their own affairs. A word from Constantine would have given the Lithuanian corps over to the Poles. By means of a false Czar, they once conquered all Muscovy. But the memory of these broad strokes of statesmanship had been erased from the history of Poland by Russian oppression. Princess Lowicka accompanied her husband in his flight. He took pleasure in often declaring that this beautiful and highly accomplished lady was an angel of consolation to him in his wretched condition. Notwithstanding her self-devotion, however, her influence was not sufficient to soften his ferocity towards the unfortunate Major Lukasinski. This high-minded patriot had languished for several years in the dungeons of the Belvedere. The insurrection only increased Constantine's rage against the noble sufferer.

He was carried off like a wild beast, and was seen in Lithuania, clothed in rags, with a flowing beard, chained to a cannon, following the chariot of Poland's scourge. During his march, whenever Constantine chanced to meet a Polish soldier, he used to exclaim, "Voilà encore un de mes braves soldats Polonais ! L'armée Polonaise est la première armée du monde !" He returned to witness its gallantry, in spite of his solemn promise to the contrary.

The whole Polish army, previous to the insurrection, consisted of thirteen infantry regiments of two battalions each, and one battalion of sappers, in all twenty-seven ; of nine cavalry regiments of four squadrons each, in all 36 ; and an artillery of eight batteries of eight pieces each, in all 64 ; together with the superannuated veterans and gens-d'armes the whole force amounted to 31,000 men. Amongst the many plans for augmenting their number, Colonel Chrzanowski proposed that of tripling it by new levies, to be at once incorporated with the army of the line. This plan, the only eligible one, Chlopicki's unfortunate policy induced him to reject. "I cannot do this," said he\*, "for it is only by leaving everything in its *statu quo*, that the emperor can be maintained in the persuasion that he may yet recover the kingdom. Now these new levies, and these alone, do not belong to the former state of

\* La Lettre du Général Chlapowski sur la Guerre de Pologne en 1831.—Berlin.

“ things. The emperor’s first demand will be, that  
“ they be dismissed, which must be accomplished  
“ with as much delay as possible, in order to gain  
“ time : and each man must keep his horse saddled,  
“ and his lance in readiness. We must, in the  
“ meantime, negotiate and demand the establish-  
“ ment of a material force as a guarantee ; for though  
“ an oath may be deemed a sufficient security, a  
“ powerful monarch can always find means to evade  
“ it.” This strange system of negotiating, to obtain  
the emperor’s permission for fortifying the little king-  
dom, and organizing a powerful force against him-  
self ; this system of vain expectation, rendered Chlo-  
picki even unjust towards the Polish troops. When  
his attention was demanded to the probability of war,  
“ How shall we carry on war ? ” he would reply.  
“ We have no able officers. I know only of two  
“ generals, Klicki and Ruttié, who understand war ;  
“ and these are superannuated. Of the rest, some  
“ can have learned nothing on the square of Saxony,  
“ and others have forgotten what they knew. We  
“ must wait till a revolution breaks out in Russia,  
“ where it is ripening in all hearts ; and when the  
“ Russians shall be engaged with their home affairs,  
“ we may find time to organize a powerful army,  
“ and to form officers.” This Utopian system he  
defended in good faith, and was ready, in case of  
need, to support it by force. “ In the actual state of  
“ affairs,” added he, “ I will not lead the troops

“ and the nation to be butchered, unless the emperor  
“ refuse all answer. Should he push his arrogance  
“ so far, then I will rather perish, than ask his  
“ mercy.”

But it was impossible to stop the torrent of national feeling. The insurrection had long been in all hearts, though but in a very few heads. By unanimous acclamations, the country now at once proclaimed the insurrection the affair of all Poles. By religious ceremonies, by public festivals, by offerings of every description deposited on the altar of the fatherland, by the rushing of volunteers into the ranks of the army, it was sanctioned as a national act from one extremity of Poland to the other. At the call “ to arms ! ” the whole nation rose as at a doomsday summons. Every feeling was immediately brought into action. The patriotic ardour was so great, that all were ready at a word from Chlopicki to lay down life and property, even to the widow’s mite. The address sent to the government by the Cracovians, the boldest and most spirited race of Poland, inhabiting those hills which rise gradually into the Carpathian mountains—will convey an idea of ardent patriotism to which the torpor of the directing power presents a dispiriting contrast. “ We  
“ ask,” so said the brave scythemen of Kosciuszko,  
“ no further guarantee of the charter which has never  
“ yet been observed—we demand only that our  
“ noble country may re-assume her rank amongst

“ the nations of Europe. Let us remember that  
 “ we are still those Poles of whom an historian\* has  
 “ said, ‘ the Poles in their warlike enterprises, some-  
 “ ‘ times promise to achieve impossibilities, and  
 “ ‘ often do even more than they have promised.’ ”  
 “ The sword is unsheathed—let us throw away the  
 “ scabbard. We touch the shore, let us burn the  
 “ ship, that the weak, if such there be amongst us,  
 “ may lose all hope of retreat. Let us not reject  
 “ foreign aid, but do not let us depend exclusively  
 “ upon it. Only in ourselves and in God be our  
 “ trust, and we shall conquer. At your call, as by  
 “ magic, 60,000 scythemen of the guard of safety  
 “ have taken arms in four days. Should you de-  
 “ mand Cracouses, thousands will march at your  
 “ bidding. We shall send them to the field the  
 “ more willingly, since your election of General  
 “ Chlopicki allows of no doubt that their efforts will  
 “ be well directed,” &c. &c. Similar scenes took  
 place in every palatinate. Peasants, who, under the  
 Russian government, must have been dragged in  
 chains to the army, now flocked eagerly to the  
 standard, to the sound of their provincial melodies.  
 Monks left their convents, priests their altars, students  
 their colleges. Even the Mohamedan Tatars, colo-  
 nized in the palatinate of Augustow, and celebrated  
 as excellent lancers, declared, in glowing addresses,  
 their sympathy with the cause, and their determina-

\* Ségur, Campagne de Russie en 1812.

tion to spill their blood in its defence. To such enthusiasm, some response was indispensable. To satisfy the general ardour, and at the same time to act consistently with his determination to temporize, Chlopicki confirmed the measures of the Provisional Government, concerning the armament. He augmented the infantry regiments by a third and fourth battalion, and the cavalry by two squadrons, each formed of the disbanded soldiers who had been recalled to service. With respect to the guard of safety, he appointed two regimentaries, each commanding four palatinates. They were instructed to organize ten battalions in every palatinate of 1000 men each, armed with scythes and pikes. But as almost all the disbanded officers resumed service in the old army, the regimentaries were under the necessity of officering their levies by civilians, which proved an effectual bar to the new troops ever becoming as efficient as the old. To each palatinate also was appointed a military commander of the moveable guard of safety, and these were to march into the field, or furnish recruits to the line, as might be found expedient. The organization of the new cavalry was carried on with more effect. Every fifty houses in towns or villages were required to furnish one horseman fully equipped. The eight palatinates armed 10,000 such, under the general appellation of Mazours and Cracouses. There is a saying, that Poland will never want for men, horses, and lances; and the present occasion confirmed its

truth. It was suggested to Chlopicki that every ten houses might easily equip one horseman, to which he merely replied—"We do not want so many irregulars." Warsaw now possessed a national guard; an institution which, however, was not new to Poland. In Kosciuszko's time, it had been foremost in the famous defence of that city against the Prussian and Russian forces; in 1809, against the Austrians. It now consisted of two regiments of infantry, each four battalions, and one regiment of horse guards; and all householders, merchants, and public functionaries, at salaries not exceeding 3000 florins, were enrolled in it. Priests and Jews were exempted, on finding a substitute. In addition to the government levies, cavalry regiments were raised and equipped by private individuals, Chlopicki encouraging their zeal by providing them with military instructors, and announcing that each regiment should bear the name of the person who raised it, which should also be inscribed on the walls of the Senate Chamber. Amongst the regiments thus furnished were the Cracouses of Prince Poniatowski, the cavalry of Kuszal, the volunteers of Kalish, the Posen cavalry, and the Zamoyski lancers. This rich and ancient family had invariably contributed a regiment to every insurrection. Five of the brothers now served in different regiments. Happy the mother that gives birth to such gallant sons!—Corps of sharp-shooters, some of them 600 strong, were also organized, and proved very effective. The



new levies, however, and particularly the infantry, were entirely destitute of arms. Of the 30,000 muskets from the arsenal, originally distributed to the people, only 15,000 were forthcoming, for the use of the disbanded soldiers. The remainder had disappeared amongst the Jews. Instead of stimulating the manufacturers at home and abroad by a bounty, Chlopicki merely gave a cold permission for their fabrication. He even neglected to procure arms from Austria during a whole month that the importation remained free. The manufacture of swords and two-edged scythes proceeded more rapidly, thanks to the zeal of private individuals. With artillery the Poles were equally ill provided. Subsequently they collected 136 field pieces, but the number never bore any proportion to the formidable train of the enemy. The walls of Warsaw, three leagues in circumference, the important fortress of Modlin, had but sixty cannon each. Zamosc, more open to assault, had two hundred and eighty. This deficiency caused an anxiety which afterwards proved to have been but too well grounded, for the Russians finally succeeded only by dint of their numerous artillery. A great evil was the want of powder, as the stock found at Modlin would scarcely suffice for two or three great battles. The mills were soon set to work; but in spite of all efforts, only a very small quantity of saltpetre (always scarce in Poland) could be procured. At the appeal of government, private persons manufactured it in their houses, and this precarious

supply was all they had to oppose to the gigantic force and inexhaustible resources of their enemies.

Owing to Chlopicki's resolute adherence to his negotiation system, all idea of an offensive campaign necessarily subsided. Napoleon said, and all strategists have repeated the proposition, that the master of the triangle formed by Warsaw, Modlin, and Seroock, would be master of Poland. Within this triangle, Chlopicki resolved to decide his country's fate; and, his determination once taken, no remonstrance was able to shake his iron will. There chanced to be about him two men of brilliant military talent, Colonels Prondzynski and Chrzanowski, whom, it would seem, he had overlooked when estimating the merits of his officers. Between these two existed a distinction such as sometimes occurs between two persons devoted to the same art or science; between the poetical and the practical man, the man of impulse, or of forethought. Prondzynski, full of resource, no sooner saw his first plan rejected, than he at once brought forward another; a third, a fourth, and all differing from each other. Chrzanowski, on the other hand, practical rather than imaginative, having once matured a plan, would not abandon it. He was more reasoning and determined than Prondzynski, and was therefore superior to him in action. Each of these men was destined to exercise his specific influence on the destiny of Poland. Prondzynski, in his inexhaustible fancy, found arguments to support all the old general's visions. He entered

into his plan of giving battle within the triangle, but insisted, in the event of defeat, upon the propriety of defending Warsaw, which the Dictator in that case proposed to abandon. Chrzanowski's idea of an insurrectionary war with Russia was different. He objected, not without reason, to the triangle, of which one angle, Serock, was not fortified at all,—Modlin was scarcely in a state to resist the feeblest attack, and Warsaw was also almost without defence. The Polish army, he said, might perish gloriously at Warsaw, but could assuredly not conquer. Not satisfied with stating his objections to the proposed plan, he submitted to Chlopicki's consideration, one of his own, which, if it had been adopted, might have decided the fate of the hostile nations.

Impassable morasses, beginning about six leagues from Brzesc Litewski, and extending one hundred in length towards the Dnieper, cut off all communication between Lithuania and Volhynia. They are never frozen, and no army has yet ventured to attempt crossing them. The Polish insurrection surprised the Russian troops separated by these morasses, when preparing to march against France, in consequence of the July revolution. Among the papers belonging to Constantine, found in the Belvedere, both the itinerary and the number of the troops were minutely detailed. Upon these facts, and upon the principle as true with respect to a nation, as to an individual, a battalion, or an army, that the weaker party, incapable of defence, ought

to attack, Chrzanowski based his plan of an offensive campaign. Having accompanied the Russian army in the late Turkish war, he was also aware that the four corps advancing from the Turkish frontier were in so disorganized a condition, that they could not reach Poland before the middle of March ; and, added to these strategic considerations, he felt convinced, as a statesman, that the autocrat, at the first intelligence of the insurrection, would issue an ukase for the extermination of the rebels. For these weighty reasons, he urged on Chlopicki the propriety of attacking, with a superior force, the five other Russian corps advancing through Lithuania, and dispersed over a long line extending from St. Petersburg to Brzesc Litewski, beginning with the Lithuanian corps of 30,000 men, chiefly officered by Poles. The four others were respectively not more numerous. He conjured Chlopicki to adopt his plan, which he offered to carry into effect with 50,000 men only ; and on the objection being made that Lithuania would not rise, he urged that they might advance by conquest. Victory, in his opinion, was ensured by the daring of the manœuvre, independently of all other circumstances. To make his object still plainer, he said that Poland would not come forward spontaneously, but must be *made to come*—that, at all events, fifteen millions of Poles had a better chance of success than four ; and that, in a defensive campaign, four of the palatinates would be immediately occupied by the enemy, and

the remaining four be doomed to struggle against the whole force of Russia. To reconcile his proposition to the system of negotiations, he observed that nothing could more effectually promote them than the advance of the Poles into Lithuania. Great empires, like great men, have their weak moments. Russia, without historical merit, grown into power by the robberies of one century only, a barbarian state without society, lay then at the mercy of the Poles. Providence—for an historian sees in such events the finger of Providence—seemed, for a moment, reconciled to them. But some fatality blinded Chlopicki; and he shrunk before the greatness of the attempt, and of the glory that must thereby have accrued to him. He rejected Chrzanowski's plan, fearing that the Russians would find means to avoid a battle until all their forces should be united, and that the pursuit of them, during a rigorous winter, on bad roads, and amid deserts of snow, would expose the Poles to inevitable destruction. Chrzanowski, as an artist yet unknown does his first composition, carried his plan to many a general of repute, but not one would enter into his views.

In pursuance of his defensive plan, the Dictator gave orders for repairing the fortifications of Praga, situated on the left bank of the Vistula, opposite to Warsaw; and at his invitation persons of every age, sex, and rank, laboured at the work from morning till night, beguiling their toil by singing patriotic

melodies. On one occasion, about a hundred beautiful country girls, with spades in their hands, led by the Starostine Zaleska, went in procession to work on the walls. The fair group was preceded by a young girl dressed in white, with purple ribbands flowing from her hair, holding in one hand a spade, and in the other a standard, on which patriotic lines shone in glittering letters. The charm of such a sight, irresistible to Polish hearts, so wrought upon the higher orders in the town, that they too joined these vestals of patriotic devotion. One poor artisan never left the walls, day or night. His father had fallen in the savage massacre under Suwaroff; and the son, attributing the misfortune of the city to the weakness of its fortifications, now devoted his own existence to render them impregnable.

Such enthusiasm must be contagious. Chlopicki seemed to apprehend this, and never appeared in public. Surrounded by the academical garde d'honneur, who watched night and day over the idol of their hearts, he spent his time in meditation—perhaps on the contrast between his self-imposed inaction, and the ardour of the nation. Aroused from his apathy, he at last sent, at Colonel Szyrma's suggestion, some of that guard to the Lithuanian frontier, to ascertain whether the Russians were making any warlike preparations. Lelewel also, as one of his ministers, sometimes whispered the propriety of marching some troops, volunteers perhaps, to insurrectionize Lithuania. Chlopicki objected, because,

as he affirmed, no insurrection to shake off the foreign yoke had broken out, but only a revolution, excited by the abuse of power. “ Let the Lithuanians rise of themselves,” said he, “ and then I shall not abandon them. At present, I have not even cartridges for them.” Lelewel then proposed to dispatch messengers to ascertain what spirit prevailed there; to which Chlopicki consented. Lithuania was groaning under oppression, and they thought it necessary to inquire if she wished for relief.

The 18th of December, the day on which the Diet was to open, drew near. Some apprehension had been entertained as to the integrity of the representatives elected under the Russian rule of corruption. To the honour of the Poles, that apprehension proved groundless. In preparatory meetings, the deputies discussed the question, whether the Diet should be opened by the Dictator in person, or should constitute itself by its own authority, and the latter course was resolved upon.

On the 17th of December, a deputation of twenty members of the Diet, with Prince Czartoryski at their head, waited on Chlopicki, at his own desire. The Prince stated the aversion felt by the country to negotiation, and the general call for war. Chlopicki replied, that he would not at that time go to war; nor would he pledge himself to do more than procure sufficient guarantees for the observance of the charter; and that no



Russian garrison should be, in future, left in Poland. “ I cannot promise any thing further,” he concluded ; “ such is my unchangeable political profession.” “ But, Dictator,” said the deputy Zwierkowski, “ we ought not to abandon Lithuania, Podolia, Volhynia, and Ukraina, which have no constitutional king. Let us act honestly, or not at all.”—“ I am here in the place of the constitutional king. I will hold no debate with you,” replied the Dictator, and quitted the room in great excitement. On Lelewel observing, that although Chlopicki had frequently made similar declarations, he had nevertheless generally added, that, in case the Muscovites were defeated at Warsaw, he would set no bounds to his demands, together with their conviction that he was the only man to whom the command of the forces could be safely entrusted, the deputies came to the conclusion that their wisest course was still to conceal his declaration from the public.

Such were the auspices under which both chambers of the Diet met on the 18th, at five in the afternoon. The members who had waited on the Dictator, presented a report, showing that it had been agreed to open the Diet on the 21st, and that the Dictator hoped to do it in person. “ Why such delay ? Let us begin business at once ;” resounded from all sides ; and the Chamber of Deputies, in consequence, immediately declared itself constituted. Ladislaus Ostrowski was elected marshal (speaker) by unanimous acclamation, and

placed in the chair. With yet louder acclamations was the insurrection proclaimed to be a national affair, and thanks voted to its authors. The deputies then added, “ We demand the liberty and independence of all Poland! We wish to embrace “ within these walls the representatives of Lithuania, “ Volhynia, Podolia, and Ukraina.” Liberal contributions were then deposited on the altar of the Fatherland, the first offering being made by the marshal.

The Senatorial Chamber expressed, through its president, Prince Czartoryski, its entire sympathy with the measures of the Chamber of Deputies; and these acts of the Diet, breathing the same patriotic spirit which animated the nation, placed it at once in direct opposition to the Dictator. As yet no deputy had dared to destroy the general illusion. Lelewel alone hinted, in his mysterious manner, that the proceedings of the Diet would prove distasteful to him. But Chlopicki comprehended his own position, and perceived, at once, that they were condemnatory of his policy. He sent in his resignation about midnight, having previously communicated his resolution to the marshal, who vainly endeavoured to persuade him to retain the authority until the Diet could provide other means for carrying on the government. The ex-dictator even taxed the Diet with having produced a counter-revolution. Two revolutions, widely differing in their objects, did indeed exist. Chlopicki confined the insurrection

within eight palatinates—the Diet extended it as far as the boundaries of ancient Poland.

During the 19th, nothing was heard in Warsaw but lamentations: “The enemy is at our gates, and “our army without a commander;” and the hostile feeling towards the Diet vented itself in menaces of doing away with it. Meanwhile the government appointed a temporary general, and prepared a report of the actual state of the country, to enable the Diet to decide what form of power was best adapted to the exigencies of the insurrection. Ostrowski, however, apprehensive still more than the rest, of civil anarchy, and thinking that, provided Chlopicki did but vanquish the Russians at Warsaw or in Lithuania, it mattered not whether he fought in the name of the national insurrection, or in that of the constitutional king, took upon himself to again impose his dictatorship upon the country. In a private interview which he had that evening with him, they concerted certain conditions, by which the dictatorship should thenceforward be restrained. Chlopicki was to be invested with unlimited power, in the exercise of which he was not to be held responsible; but a committee was to be appointed to watch over his conduct, and at its will, or by his voluntary resignation, the dictatorship was to cease. This committee was to consist of two senators and three deputies, elected by the marshal of the Diet and the president of the Senate. The Diet had been adjourned till the 21st, but Ostrowski, on

pretext of the critical situation of affairs, summoned it for the 20th, when, by his own authority, he changed the object of the meeting. Instead of the government report, the new project, relative to the dictatorship, was brought forward by the marshal himself, who prefaced his motion by observing, that amendment or discussion were here out of the question, and that it must be accepted or rejected, as it now stood.

Not less than twenty-four deputies spoke in succession in favour of the dictatorship, recommending, however, a modification of the proposed conditions. But they were silenced by the marshal's unvarying assertion that Chlopicki would not consent that a letter of them should be changed, and the motion was carried, as it were, by assault. The third article was, however, so far altered as to permit the Diet to elect eight, and the senate five, of their respective members, who, with the marshal and the president, were to compose the committee of surveillance. The Diet then condescended to refer the proposed amendment to Chlopicki, to which he gave his consent without further hesitation. The tribunes were at this time filled with officers and academical guards, who, by their hisses and clamour, drowned all opposition to Chlopicki. Lelewel, not satisfied with the discussion, had recourse to his habitual intrigue. Quitting the ministerial bench, he mingled alternately with the deputies and the public; and on being asked the motive of his strange conduct, replied in

a low voice, accompanying his words with indignant gestures, "Because affairs are conducted in an "unworthy manner." Yet he wanted courage to embody his sentiments in one of those bursts of eloquence which sometimes decide a nation's fate. Ninety-three deputies voted for the unrestricted dictatorship, and fourteen, of which number was the marshal, qualified it by introducing the words "under "existing circumstances." One individual only, the deputy Morowski, opposed it altogether. Lelewel, still declaring that in a discussion of such a nature he could not make known his real opinion, voted with the majority !

The act, proclaiming the insurrection to be a national affair, was then signed by all the deputies ; after which the marshal proposed that a manifesto of the nation to the rest of Europe should be drawn up, setting forth the causes of the insurrection, and its object. As the precipitate vote on the dictatorship had left no time for discussion, a committee, elected by the Diet, was authorised to publish, in unison with the committee of surveillance, that manifesto, the political principle of which was solemnly inserted in the protocol of the Diet. The deputies then proceeded to the senate, where Chlopicki presented himself in order to be invested with the dictatorial power.

On entering the royal castle, he placed himself close to the throne, whilst Prince Czartoryski thus addressed him—

“ Honourable Dictator—The Diet confers upon  
“ you, this day, the most dazzling testimony of  
“ unlimited confidence that a man can receive from  
“ his fellow citizens. Labour for the welfare of our  
“ beloved country. Far from us be even the shadow  
“ of suspicion, for we know your noble character,  
“ and rely on your firmness, on your word as a  
“ true Pole. In that word lies the pledge of your  
“ glorious reward—your own unclouded fame, and  
“ the happiness of our posterity. Both chambers  
“ of the Diet entrust their authority to you.”

Ostrowski next spoke, and concluded his address with these remarkable words, as if he attempted to change the political creed of the Dictator, “ Your name augurs victory. You are destined to re-  
“ conquer the independence of our country.”

Chlopicki's reply was in the following terms:—  
“ Representatives of the nation,—I esteem myself  
“ happy in the confidence you repose in me ; a life  
“ would be too short to justify it. I accept the  
“ dictatorship, because I see the salvation of the  
“ country only in the unity of power. I will do  
“ my utmost to realize the expectations of my  
“ countrymen. I shall retain the power you  
“ entrust to me until you shall judge fit to with-  
“ draw it from me ; then, bowing to your decision,  
“ I shall retire to private life, happy in the thought  
“ of having consecrated my last exertions to my  
“ country.” He then left the ancient dwelling  
of the kings of Poland, at nine in the evening,

invested with a power such as the Poles had never committed to any of their kings. The populace took off the horses, and would have drawn his carriage. To this, however, he would not consent, but could only avoid receiving this testimony of public esteem by getting out and walking through the streets, whilst the multitude filled the air with joyful acclamations. The city was immediately illuminated.

The proceedings of the session of the 18th, were a re-echo of the national enthusiasm. The session of the 20th, proved, that it is sometimes easier to terrify or to blind an assembled body of men into taking a measure prejudicial to the public good, than to coerce the will of one resolute individual. Ostrowski's apprehension of domestic anarchy procured the confirmation of Chlopicki as dictator. His wish to accustom the mind of the people to the authority of one individual, as the only means salvatory of the insurrection, was in itself most praiseworthy and patriotic ; but the confirmation of Chlopicki, whose antipathy for action resulting from his ignorance of the national force was known, proved a fatal transaction.



## CHAPTER V.

### *Second Period of the Dictatorship.*

ABOUT this time Chlopicki introduced a change in the administration. He substituted for the Provisional Government a Supreme National Council, to see to the execution of his decrees, to supply money for the treasury, food for the army, and to take measures for spreading the insurrection, and enlightening public opinion.

No satisfactory communication having arrived from St. Petersburg, Chlopicki once more dispatched Colonel Wylezynski with a letter to the autocrat, stating, that he had re-assumed the power, lest it should fall into the hands of agitators, and assuring him “*que la tempête s'est calmée.*” He added, however, that the same sentiment which united the troops under one standard, armed the capital, and penetrated, like an electric spark, into the palatinates, still animated all hearts. That the wish of the nation was not to dissolve all connection with Russia, but to receive guarantees for their own constitutional liberties, and the extension of them to the sister countries. “Should those liberties—not a

“ concession on the part of the sovereign, but resulting  
 “ from a solemn contract between him and the  
 “ people—be finally refused, the nation was prepared  
 “ to risk all for the accomplishment of its dearest  
 “ wish—national independence.” Urged, however,  
 by Prince Czartoryski, not to depend too much on  
 negociation, Chlopicki now began to introduce some  
 useful reforms in the old army, and ordered several  
 detachments to march towards Lithuania. He also  
 showed himself oftener in public, and visited the  
 fortress of Modlin. These indications of approach-  
 ing war were hailed with joy by the citizens, who  
 offered to equip a third regiment, to be called “ The  
 “ Children of Warsaw ;” and the women proposed  
 forming themselves into three companies, to follow  
 the army, and in case of need, to contribute their  
 assistance. But this idea not being approved either  
 by their countrymen or the Dictator, they organised  
 a society under the presidency of Madame Hoffman  
 Tanska (eminent by her literary productions), for  
 the care of the sick and wounded ; and all ranks,  
 whether of the city or country, occupied themselves  
 in preparing lint and other necessaries. Chlopicki  
 also turned his attention to the means of procuring  
 arms, and offered large premiums to those who should  
 furnish them. In spite of a formal prohibition, some  
 thousand stand of muskets had been imported from  
 Austria. He also issued an order, that all the church  
 bells which could be dispensed with should be con-  
 verted into cannon, and the arsenal was in conse-

quence soon stocked with metal. But, as under the Russian government, the manufacture of arms had been prohibited, much delay arose in the casting, owing to the inexpertness of the workmen, which was unjustly attributed by the public to secret disloyalty, and Chlopicki's neglect. Other complaints were also made of him. The Lithuanians resident in Warsaw had repeatedly solicited him to send troops to insurrectionize their province, or at least to allow them to organise a legion from amongst themselves, to which request he had always given the discouraging reply, that he had not cartridge for them. Many natives of Austrian Galicia, and of the Grand Duchy of Posen, particularly the collegians of Cracow, came to Warsaw to join the insurrection, a step which much displeased the Dictator, as endangering his pending negotiations; and so determined was he on sending them back, that they were obliged to enter the city by stealth.

The public dissatisfaction was embittered by the continuance in office of many persons known formerly as Russian partisans, and the murmurs, at first only whispered, finally broke out in the very hearing of the dictator. Colonel Szyrma, one of his greatest supporters, then established a Court of Tribunes, to be chosen from among the academical guard. Their office was to discover and denounce to government such of the public functionaries who were either indifferent, or half-Russianized. Many trembled lest the noble youths should prove so many bloody St.

Justs; but Szyrma's popularity was so great, that even the Dictator thought it advisable to permit this bold innovation, and to promote its success. Szyrma commenced the publication of a periodical paper, called "The Journal of the Guard of Honour." His example was followed by others; and the number of such periodicals in Warsaw which, previous to the insurrection, did not exceed eight, soon increased to thirty, amongst which the Polish Courier, edited by several distinguished political writers, held undisputed pre-eminence. All these literary pugilists, from first to last, aimed their blows at the dictatorship, destroying, piece by piece, that power so admirably calculated to meet the emergency. But whilst Chlopicki's inactivity continued to be the theme of animadversion, the press found a fresh object for its bitterness in a proclamation published by Nicholas on the 18th of December, commencing thus:—"Poles! an infamous attempt has troubled the peace of your country. Men, who dishonour the Polish name, have conspired against the brother of your sovereign, have trampled upon oaths, and blinded the people to the dearest interests of your country." After thus stigmatizing the authors of the insurrection, the autocrat further commanded, 1st. All Russians, prisoners of the insurrection, to be set at liberty; 2nd. The council of administration to reassume its functions; 3rd. All the other authorities to pay it implicit obedience;

4th. All the troops to assemble at Plock, and there await further orders ; 5th. The new levies to be immediately disbanded, and their arms delivered up to the proper authorities, &c. &c. Even the insulting and arrogant tone of this proclamation, which caused every patriot to thrill with indignation, did not suffice to awaken Chlopicki from his torpor, and to dispel the visions of peace which entranced him. At the very outbreak of the insurrection, its supporters formed two classes ; each animated by a spirit entirely opposed to that of the other. The one panted to march on—still on,—the other desired first to look around. The dictatorship was hailed by both ; and Chlopicki, therefore, had it in his power to destroy the germ of disunion, by directing each to important objects. But, pent up in the streets of Warsaw, the insurrection was doomed either to languish, or to prey upon itself ; internal discord became unavoidable, and parties fatal to the cause arose. Differences of opinion as to the best means of delivering the country, gradually became the distinctive marks of certain ranks and classes of society. Their origin may be discovered in the political changes which Poland had undergone since her partition, and should rather be viewed as so many projects for re-conquering the national independence, than considered as social theories.

Some descendants of the ancient families still survived, forming a tie between the old Poland and the young ; when the latter burst her chains,

ancient Poland rose with her,—the grave of her thoughts opened. Prince Czartoryski, a descendant of the glorious dynasty of Jagellons, impersonates that sacred tie between the two worlds of Poland. Nobles without the privileges of caste, without court or courtiers, often impoverished by the stranger, sometimes distinguished, but never rendered more illustrious by the title of German Count or Baron\*, they still enjoy an influence in Poland such as is elsewhere exercised only by a patrician or monied aristocracy. Many were there who, without questioning whether the government proceeded well or not, espoused the cause sanctioned by the names of a Czartoryski or a Radziwill, &c., &c. These were now designated as aristocrats. Possessed of material as well as moral influence, if the existence of a party could have been admitted, they constituted the only national one.—As during the reign of Napoleon, there had never been time for debates, which, besides, must have proved unavailing, no parliamentary reputation had survived the period of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw ; but the Diet of the constitutional kingdom could boast of

\* There is no titled nobility in Poland, except a few princely families. According to Polish law, every nobleman assuming a foreign title lost the rights of citizenship. *Equus Polonus par omnibus, nemini secundus* (Polish noble, equal to all, inferior to none). Every Polish noble is a baron of the German empire, according to a decree issued by the Emperor Leopold I., as an acknowledgment of services rendered to him by the Poles under Sobieski.

two popular opposition leaders in the brothers Niemoiowski. Deeply versed in the English and French theories of constitutional government, they viewed the insurrection through the prism of the charter, which they wished to extend to the sister-countries. Their rallying word was : “ Let the constitutional king declare immediate war against the absolute Czar.” Some deputies sympathized with them, and formed what was styled the constitutional or Kalishian party ; but, as on every important occasion they voted with the aristocrats, their shadow party soon ceased to be observed. Another—the revolutionary party—still remained, which at one time comprehended the nation, the army, and more especially—as the authors of the insurrection—the ensigns. But when these last were dispersed in the different regiments, when Maurice Mochnacki, the advocate both of military and revolutionary absolutism, had been driven from the arena, this also lost its importance. Marauders from the late patriotic club, idle politicians, or political pretenders, alone remained under the nominal presidency of Lelewel. To heap invective on the slumbering Dictator, to recite verses, and to riot at the Honoratka coffee-rooms, was their political creed ; no other could have been advanced. The dissensions already alluded to, which, though arising from pure motives, did considerable mischief, by consuming much valuable energy, became more evident with the advance of the new year. The insurrection in



Warsaw ought to have rolled on in a tranquil atmosphere ; but instead of this the citizens were kept in a continual anxiety by the presence of the vile brood of spies and denunciators, beneath whose influence the nation had writhed for so many years. Some lingered in prison, while others were permitted openly to show themselves, and the idea of putting them to death was too revolting to be entertained by the government. The press teemed with bitter discussions on this subject. The aristocrats maintained that revenge would be ungenerous—the constitutionalists, that they were amenable to no existing law—but the revolutionists denounced them as traitors, and demanded that capital punishment should be inflicted on them. There were no less than 6000 of these wretches under the Russian government.

The Committee of the Manifesto at length completed its work. Its members, as well as those of the Supreme National Council, having affixed their signatures to the document, the Princes Czartoryski and Radziwill, and the deputy Ledochowski, waited on the Dictator, to inform him that it was ready to be printed. He strongly objected to the measure, and, with much irritation, threatened to publish a countermanifesto of his own. Ledochowski, however, assured him that the manifesto would be immediately published, notwithstanding his opposition, and it was accordingly inserted the following day (3rd of January) in the Polish Courier, though without signatures. The contents of the manifesto, the

eloquent and dignified tone of which, has been the theme of much and general approbation, may be thus epitomised :—

“ The conditions forced on the Poles, by the  
“ Congress of Vienna, having been violated by  
“ Russia, in the so-called kingdom of Poland, as  
“ also in the sister-countries, all legitimate connec-  
“ tion between that power and the nation has in  
“ consequence, ceased to exist, and the people are  
“ become slaves, possessing the right to burst their  
“ chains and forge them into arms.” After an elo-  
quent exposition of the abuses which had driven  
the nation to this extremity, the manifesto thus  
proceeds—

“ The Polish people rise from ignominy and  
“ degradation, with the firm resolution never again  
“ to bend to the yoke they now throw off, and never  
“ to lay down the arms of their ancestors until they  
“ shall have re-conquered their independence ;—  
“ until they shall have insured to themselves the  
“ enjoyment of that freedom which they demand,  
“ under the two-fold right of their noble inheritance,  
“ and by the pressing necessity of the times ;—  
“ until they shall have delivered their brethren from  
“ the Russian yoke, and made them partakers in  
“ their liberty and independence.

“ *We are not influenced by any national hatred*  
“ *against the Russians*, whose race and our own  
“ have a common origin. There was a time when  
“ we consoled ourselves for the loss of our inde-

“ pence by the reflection, that, although an union  
“ under the same sceptre might be unfavourable to  
“ our particular interests, it might be the means of  
“ extending to a population of forty millions the  
“ enjoyment of free institutions\*, now considered  
“ objects of primary necessity throughout the civi-  
“ lized world, for the well-being both of monarchs  
“ and subjects.

“ So far from our ancient liberty and independence  
“ having been prejudicial to our immediate neigh-  
“ bours, we are fully persuaded, that they have ever  
“ served as a balance and safeguard to Europe, and  
“ will in that light be henceforth of higher import-  
“ ance and utility than ever. Thus circumstanced,  
“ we appear at the tribunal of sovereigns and of  
“ nations, in the entire conviction that the voice  
“ both of policy and humanity will be listened to  
“ in our favour.

“ Should it, however, happen that in this conflict,  
“ of which the dangers and difficulties cannot  
“ be denied, we are doomed to defend, unaided,  
“ the general interests of civilization; still, confiding  
“ in the justice of our cause, in our valour, and in  
“ the never-failing aid of the Almighty, we shall  
“ fight for freedom to our last breath; and should it  
“ then appear that Providence has destined this land  
“ to eternal slavery, every true Pole may cheer his  
“ dying moments with the consolatory reflection,

\* See the first Diet under Alexander.

“ that, if he was not permitted by Heaven to save his  
“ country, he was, at least, by his heroism, in the  
“ death-struggle, shielded for a time the nascent  
“ liberties of Europe.”

The basis of this manifesto is unsound. It derives the rights of the Poles from the treaty of Vienna, which did but sanction the sixth partition of their country. Their right to rise and expel their invaders, based as it is on eternal justice, is not to be proscribed or sanctioned by any treaty. The principle of deducing from the abuse of power, a right to shake off allegiance to such power, was, besides, a dangerous one. France and England might have reasoned, Austria and Prussia might have threatened, the autocrat into redressing the grievances of the Poles; and had Nicholas possessed more wit and less pride, he would have done it of himself, and thus have removed all ground for insurrection. There was also a great omission in the manifesto concerning the forfeiture of the Polish crown by Nicholas—and which the Committee had not been empowered to supply.

On the 7th of January, Wylezynski returned from St. Petersburg, bringing an order from the autocrat, enjoining the strict execution of the ukase of the 18th of December. Nicholas was pleased also to thank Sobolewski, the President of the late Council of Administration, for his loyalty in having resigned office rather than consent to sign the order for the convocation of the Diet; and, as a still fur-

ther proof of his loyalty, and that of the other members, he required their presence, dead or alive (*morts ou vifs*) at St. Petersburg. On receiving this document, the Supreme National Council, and the Committee of Surveillance, again represented to Chlopicki the extreme risk to which he would expose the cause by further procrastination, and urged him to commence hostilities : but he still refused to take upon himself the responsibility of interrupting the pending negotiations, and convoked the Diet for the 17th, that the representatives of the nation might pronounce upon the fate of the country. As the Deputy Jezierski was soon expected back from his diplomatic mission, both the Council and the Committee determined to await his arrival. Chlopicki, in the meantime, prepared for war. Instead of the two regimentaries he appointed four experienced generals, and ordered the moveable guard of safety to be formed into sixteen infantry regiments of three battalions each. He also withdrew the command of the Academical Guard from Lach Szyrma, and gave it to a veteran officer, upon the pretext that this sacred legion would soon be marched into the field ; but his real motive was the dread he had of the influence of the Tribunes. The noble youths were very unwilling to part with their commander, who, however, persuaded them to submit from the consideration that all rightful power ought to be obeyed. The Diet had acknowledged, by a vote of public thanks to Lach Szyrma, the invaluable

services he had rendered to his country during that momentous period.

The measures adopted at St. Petersburg meanwhile, were full of energy. On the first news of an insurrection in Warsaw, a loud huzza resounded through the empire, a cry of the hate which had existed for ages. Whilst the representatives of the Poles asserted that they were not influenced by national animosity, the autocrat left no means untried to inflame the ignorant prejudices of the Russians, to awaken the deep-rooted antipathy of race, and to rouse their religious fanaticism. He called upon them to renew their oath of fidelity, and himself swore not to sheathe his sword until the last of the rebels should be punished. His audacity increased in proportion to the humanity and moderation of the Poles. Elate with pride and power, in a thundering ukase, addressed to the Russians on the 29th of December, he thus expressed himself:—  
“ Though already trembling in fear of the chastisement which awaits them, they (the Poles) dare yet, for a moment, to think of victory ; and propose that we should place them on an equality with ourselves ! Russians, you know that we reject such a proposal with indignation. To the first intelligence of their treason, your response was a fresh oath of unshaken fidelity. One sentiment alone animates all hearts ; the resolution to spare nothing, to sacrifice all, even life itself, *for the honour of your emperor. God, the defender of*

“ *right, is with us, and all-powerful Russia will be*  
“ *able, by one decisive blow, to silence those who*  
“ *have dared to disturb her tranquillity,*” &c. Deeds confirmed his words. He slipped his dogs of war, and set all his force in motion against Poland, whilst no means were omitted to paralyze any attempt of insurrection in Lithuania.

Such was the state of affairs, when Prince Lubecki and Jezierski reached St. Petersburg on the 25th of December. They were detained a considerable time at Narva, and not permitted to proceed till Lubecki declared that it was only in his ministerial character that he now begged an audience of the emperor, in order to lay before him a report of the occurrences at Warsaw. Jezierski, on his part, demanded his audience in quality of a member of the Polish Diet. Lubecki had but one interview, and by what means the cunning minister accomplished his mission, remains unknown. Jezierski had several, at which General Benkendorf was also present. The Polish envoy shrunk from displaying the whole truth to the monarch. “ The insurrection in Warsaw,” he told the emperor-king, “ was caused by a small number  
“ of young officers and students. The correctness  
“ of this statement was proved by subsequent events  
“ not less than by the circumstances of its outbreak,  
“ for the insurgents had no other leaders than  
“ lieutenants. At the call ‘ to arms, the Russians  
“ ‘ murder us,’ the insurgents, were, however, joined  
“ by the fourth of the line, the battalion of sappers,



“ and the populace; but their measure showed neither  
“ a decided object nor any decided plan; and it was  
“ not until two days after that the citizens armed, in  
“ order to protect their property from the mob.”—  
“ I understand,” replied Nicholas, “ why the citizens,  
“ in the first instance, organized the guard of safety;  
“ but what reason can be given for the armament  
“ throughout the country?—for the warlike prepara-  
“ tions?—against whom are they arming? Do they  
“ presume to carry on war against me?”—“ The  
“ fear lest all the nation should be punished for the  
“ fault of some individuals,” replied Jezierski,  
“ has united all against the common danger, and  
“ this fear can alone be removed by a word of mercy,  
“ pronounced by the sovereign.”—“ I am king of  
“ Poland, and will continue so,” rejoined Nicholas;  
“ but I will listen to no concession demanded of  
“ me by armed men. Am I to enter into negocia-  
“ tions with my subjects!—I, their legitimate sove-  
“ reign? Am I to endure that they prescribe to  
“ me the conditions under which they will continue  
“ my subjects? I do not, however, wish to act  
“ rashly. Suggest some means worthy of a king  
“ of Poland who is at the same time emperor of  
“ Russia, calculated to bring the affair to an amica-  
“ ble arrangement.” Jezierski remaining silent,  
Nicholas gave him to understand that he wished the  
Poles themselves to remove the difficulties; in other  
words, that in case they would erect scaffolds for the  
authors of the insurrection, he might then be per-

suaded to treat with them. Finding that Jezierski still continued silent, he proceeded to touch on the subject of the re-union of the provinces, and declared it to be out of the question, as he ought not to favour one part of his dominions by injuring the other. Jezierski then replied that he was not prepared to discuss such profound mysteries of policy; and was dismissed with a solemn declaration, on the part of Nicholas, that the first cannon fired by the Poles would be the decree for their destruction, and with a permission for him to write to General Benckendorf whenever he wished to make any further communication. Jezierski availed himself of this permission to address a letter to the general, in which he repeated his previous statement of the origin of the insurrection, and suggested, as a means of restoring tranquillity, some better guarantee of the constitution in the kingdom, and of the rights of nationality in the sister-countries. With a thrill of emotion, he added, that, although neither diplomatist nor statesman, he could not abstain from observing that the constitution had been in many instances violated by the government. On the margin of this letter, Nicholas wrote, with his own hand, various comments, such as—"I did not violate my oath—" the nation, on the contrary, has broken its oath to me, and I may, in consequence, consider myself released from mine. I have not, however, done so, and this is all I can now say. A different line of conduct would be an unpardonable weakness

“ in me, and to which no power shall force me.  
“ Let them submit *to my mercy, and they shall be*  
“ *happy*—the word of a monarch, able to appreciate  
“ honour, has its weight,” &c.

Lubecki remained at St. Petersburg. Jezierski returned to Warsaw on the 13th of January, with the above letter, commented upon by the autocrat. Meeting on his way back a considerable number of Russian troops, he was so struck with alarm, that, on entering Poland, he did not scruple to say, that the Russians, with their *tschakoes* alone, would beat the Poles, and for this coward expression he narrowly escaped hanging at several post stations. This discouraging intelligence aggravated the general dissatisfaction with the man who had so long held the insurrection in bonds. The popular displeasure vented itself in rumours of an ultra revolution, and Lelewel, the antiquarian, was pointed out as its author. Colonel Dobrzanski accused him to the Dictator, who ordered both the denunciator and the denounced to be arrested. The National Council, on this outrage being offered to one of its members, tendered its resignation ; but, fortunately, the whole affair proved to be merely an invention of some friend of the Dictator, and it dropped without entailing any serious consequences.

On the 16th, the Committee of Surveillance waited on Chlopicki, to learn his opinion of the intelligence received from St. Petersburg. He abruptly declared he would no longer retain his power, as the praises

bestowed on him by the emperor might diminish the confidence reposed in him by the public. He advised that the negotiations should be pursued through the mediation of Prussia, and even refused to lead the army into the field, as, when opposed to the giant force of Russia, it must, in his opinion, inevitably be vanquished in the first encounter. The catastrophe, he concluded, obvious as it was, would, however, be imputed to him alone, and might cast upon him the stigma of treachery. Some of the Committee then observed, that when assuming the dictatorship he had not calculated upon a diminution of the national forces, and that he ought not now to withdraw from it the powerful support of his talents. Still more irritated, Chlopicki repeated that he would not command, as, in case of defeat, he should be called a traitor. Another member then suggested the augmentation of the ranks by scythemen :—" Command thou thy scythemen, for I will " not," cried the Dictator, absolutely furious ; and, losing all self-control, he added :—" If young men " can conscientiously believe themselves absolved " from their oath, I, for my part, shall remain faithful to the sovereign : " and, with these words, he resigned the dictatorship, which he professed to have taken with the sole object of saving the country from civil anarchy. Prince Czartoryski endeavoured to induce him to retain at least the military command, and was warmly seconded by Ledochowski. " I

“ should be a scoundrel in doing so,” cried Chlopicki, still much agitated ; on which Ledochowski observed to him, that he would then be obliged to serve as a private. “ Well, Ledochowski,” rejoined the Dictator, “ I will so fight, but thou must do it also.” His rage exceeded all bounds : he struck the door so violently with his fist, that it gave away. All present were amazed at his conduct, and Prince Czartoryski observed, “ C’est le soldat le plus mal “ élevé que j’aie vu.” Their remonstrances at length calmed him, and he dismissed the delegates with civility. The following day, the Committee of Surveillance made another effort to persuade him to retain the command of the army, but in vain. He would only consent to remaining unconditional Dictator, and was in consequence compelled to resign. Meantime his physician sent to conjure the government not to give him any appointment, on the plea that he was actually labouring under insanity ; but this was afterwards proved to have been merely an artifice for the purpose of saving his life, which was in no small danger from the popular indignation. The Academical Guards, in particular, could not forgive his having so long abused the confidence of the nation ; but Colonel Szyrma interposed, and his influence persuaded these youths to spare the man whom they had so much honoured, and whose obstinacy, however fatal in its effects, proceeded from conscientious motives. They contented themselves

with confining him as a prisoner in his own residence, where he amused his captivity by reading novels.

It must be recorded, to the honour of the Poles, that, in this hour of abandonment by him whom they had idolized as their only deliverer, their courage did not sink, but that their energy rose with the increasing danger. A total change of opinion ensued, however, respecting the form of government to be adopted. Their confidence in man was gone, since Chlopicki, in whom they had reposed unlimited trust, had not only disappointed the general expectation, but was even deprived of his senses, as it was reported in Warsaw and throughout the country. Not a single individual, therefore, but an inert institution, a Diet of one hundred and fifty dictators, was to be the nation's pilot in her passage from death to life. Fatal change—the unhappy consequence of Chlopicki's non-use of the power entrusted to him.

The Diet was opened by Prince Czartoryski on the 19th. All the deputies and senators signed the manifesto of the Polish nation to Europe, after which Roman Soltyk moved that it should be completed. The first article deprived the family of Romanoff of the Polish crown; the second absolved all Poles from their oath of fidelity to Russia; and the third proclaimed the sovereignty of the Polish nation. A profound silence of some minutes followed the reading of this motion, which was broken by the Deputy Morozewicz, proposing to refer it to the

consideration of a Committee. At the next sitting, the Diet elected out of seven candidates Prince Radziwill Generalissimo of the Army. Considerations of policy determined this choice, the Prince being related to the Royal family of Prussia, and having great influence in Lithuania, where he was proprietor of vast estates. But a still more weighty reason with the Diet was the conviction that Chlopicki would assist no other than the Prince with his advice. Radziwill briefly acknowledged the honour with, "Such as I have been, such I shall be;" and expressed his willingness to resign as soon as an abler warrior should be found. On the 24th they settled the privilege and degree of power with which the generalissimo was to be invested. He was authorized to appoint officers up to the rank of colonels, to institute courts-martial, to confer military decorations, and to have a seat in the government, with a casting vote on military subjects. He could be dismissed only by the Diet. Not even in the time of the greatest liberty had the Diet ever appointed a generalissimo. An insurrectionary government ought to watch, map in hand, every step of the general-in-chief, and have power to dismiss him, if necessary, even on the field of battle. But such salutary provisions were overlooked by the Diet on this occasion. At the same meeting, Lelewel presented a petition from a considerable number of Lithuanians and Volhynians then in Warsaw, that their countries might be admitted to share the struggle for the independence



of all Poland, and that they might be authorized to organize a Lithuanio-Volhynian legion. Both requests were granted with acclamations, and a committee for carrying on the affairs of those countries appointed, of which Lelewel was chosen president, and Prince Radziwill, honorary president. Whilst not a day passed without the Diet taking some important measure, the worn-out revolutionists of the Honoratka, some idle politicians, such as abound in every capital, and a few of the wrecks of the patriotic club, embodied themselves in a society, to which they gave the name of "The Patriotic Society," under the presidency of Lelewel; Roman Soltyk, and Maurice Mochnecki, being elected vice-presidents. The latter, from having been the first to pronounce Chlopicki a traitor, was now very popular with these would-be revolutionists. He availed himself of this to endeavour to do away with the Diet, or, at all events, to raise a Tarpeian rock for its members, by establishing a *revolutionary commune*. He found a zealous supporter in Adam Gurowski, an ex-count, a political weathercock, and born demagogue. Cynicism, cosmopolitism, and obstinacy, were the elements of his singular character. The society, however, contained within itself the germ of its dissolution, or, at least, of its inefficiency. Lelewel imagined that the proceedings of the society might be made to harmonize with those of the Diet; and so also thought Roman Soltyk, who joined the revolutionists, in order, as he said, to gain popularity; and

the society, in consequence of their opinion, sent an address to the Diet to inform the latter of its existence. “Away with your patriotic society—every man in the nation is a patriot,” cried the deputies, and rejected the address with scorn. Mochnacki had foreseen this insult, and flattered himself that it would rouse the energies of his associates. Convinced at last that the society was wholly devoid of what the French call *du mouton dans le parti*, he left it for the bayonet. Gurowski did not yet lose all hope, and tried every means to agitate the citizens. Amongst other contrivances, he got up a funeral procession in honour of the celebrated bootmaker, Kilinski, who, in the time of Kosciuszko, headed the populace, and drove out the Russians, and was subsequently a colonel in the Polish army. But no procession could call forth such another bootmaker. Disgusted at his ill success, Gurowski determined to follow Mochnacki’s example, but he wished first to create some alarm in the city. The 25th of January was fixed by the Diet for proclaiming the deposition of Nicholas, and Gurowski determined to have a funeral procession on that day in honour of the first Russian martyrs of liberty, executed in 1826. Both ceremonies were equally solemn, and equally unsuccessful. Russia still groans in slavery—Poland bleeds still under the iron sceptre of the Russian autocrat. The funeral procession commenced early in the morning. Thousands went out to gaze, as it moved from the chambers of the University. Some of the

academical guard bore on their crossed muskets a coffin covered with black cloth, and adorned with wreaths of evergreens, and tricoloured flags. The celebrated names of Ryleyeff, Bestuzeff, Pestel, Muravieff, and Kochowski, glittered on five suits of armour. At the coffin head walked one of the academical guard, carrying the tricoloured flag, and three captains of the same guard acted as masters of the ceremony. An immense concourse of persons, military and civil, joined the procession. It stopped in the square of Sigismond, adjoining the Royal Castle, where the Diet was then engaged in debate; and Gurowski, wearing a red cap with a white feather, addressed the multitude in language which, had it been understood, might have produced a terrible commotion. Similar addresses were delivered in several other places, and, finally, in a Greek chapel, where a service was performed for the Russian martyrs, without, however, producing any sensation. The cortège, after parading through the capital, returned to the place from whence it started.

Whilst this was passing in the streets, the Diet was listening with indignation to the delivery of the diplomatic message, by Jezierski. The words written by Nicholas, "That he had faithfully observed  
" the obligations transmitted to him by his predecessor, and that the Poles were guilty of high  
" treason," filled the measure of their resentment. Much laughter was excited by his statement, "That  
" the Poles had carried their ingratitude so far as to

“ turn against himself the pieces of artillery he had  
“ sent them from Varna ;” and “ that he had spent  
“ annually 14,000 ducats out of his own pocket in  
“ carrying on their diplomatic affairs.” The deputies observed that the expenditure alluded to was, no doubt, for the maintenance of spies. Such complaints were, indeed, ridiculous. Their indignation was yet increased by two proclamations from the Russian field-marshal Diebitch-Zabalkanski. In the first, addressed to the Polish nation, he stigmatized all Poles as criminals, and offered them no alternative but that of unconditional submission to the mercy of his master, or the scaffold. In the other—to the Polish army—he endeavoured to flatter the soldiers, by alluding to the well known chivalry and loyalty of Polish warriors, and was profuse in his promises of reward to all who should join him, and assist in bringing the guilty nation to obedience. The Marshal of the Diet, availing himself of this moment of indignation, introduced in a few energetic words the subject of the deposition. “ Diplomatic communications,” he said, “ as well  
“ as the proclamations of Diebitch, have fully demonstrated that the object of the insurrection  
“ cannot be attained without war. The decisive  
“ moment is come ; the Czar of Muscovy has  
“ commanded his hordes to invade our soil, to  
“ rivet again on a freeborn nation chains they have  
“ just burst. It is not the first time that the barbarians have strewed our country with their bones,

“ and fertilized it by their blood. Shall we, terror-  
“ stricken, or bowed down by slavish habits, still  
“ acknowledge Nicholas as our lawful sovereign?  
“ No; he was the first to break the oath imposed  
“ upon us by the sword. That oath alone which  
“ the Poles swore to the Piasts, to the Jagellons,  
“ and to their freely elected kings, should bind us  
“ now. Let Europe cease to regard us as rebellious  
“ subjects—let her recognise in us an independent  
“ nation, which must exist in accordance with the  
“ rights vouchsafed to it by God.” When the  
marshal had concluded, a solemn silence prevailed,  
and his brother then added, “ As Nicholas himself  
“ cannot conscientiously deny that the constitu-  
“ tion has been violated, let the prophetic words  
“ be fulfilled which my father uttered, when, as  
“ president of the Senate, he received the Consti-  
“ tutional Charter from the Imperial Commissary,  
“ ‘ Woe to him who shall violate it!’ ” Ledo-  
chowski next arose, and exclaimed, in that powerful  
voice which soon resounded in St. Petersburg,  
and was echoed far and wide, “ That which is in  
“ our hearts, let our lips utter. Let us with one  
“ voice proclaim—Away with Nicholas!” All  
present, impelled by the force of his expression,  
unanimously echoed the words, “ Away with  
“ Nicholas!” and Niemcewicz immediately drew  
up the act of deposition, which was signed by the  
deputies and senators.

This great measure did not, however, produce

much impression on the public. It came too late. All attention was turned to the field of Grochow; to those stately woods, which, in a wide semi-circle, gird the capital of Poland; those woods, dark and gloomy as the nation's fate, through which the savages of Suwaroff had once come to butcher the population of Praga. Still the deposition, though so unheeded, was an heroic reply to the insulting language of Diebitch.

After a discussion of four days, the Diet, on the 29th, completed their arrangements concerning the government, which they resolved should be called the National Government of the kingdom of Poland. The constitutional royalty was conferred on five persons. Measures were to be decided upon by a majority, and in case of the votes being equal, in the absence of the president, a member of the government, elected by the smallest sum of votes, was to go out. The same member was also to cede his place to the Generalissimo, whenever the latter should think proper to make use of his privilege. Prince Czartoryski, ever the zealous advocate for a vigorous government, objected to this arrangement, as inadequate to realize this paramount condition. Yet he gave his consent to it for the moment, in the conviction that the Diet would not contrive any thing better. The deputies, indeed, impressed with the fatal consequences of the dictatorship, so much dreaded concentrated power, that they even desired to establish a committee, consisting of thirteen



members, to superintend the government. Prince Czartoryski was unanimously elected president of the government, and the other members chosen were the deputies Vincent Niemeiowski, Theophile Morawski, the Kalishians, Stanislaus Barzykowski, the aristocrat, and Lelewel, the revolutionist;—the smallest number of votes were for the latter, and he would probably not have been elected at all, but for the fear entertained by the deputies that he might otherwise prove a Robespierre to them. A groundless fear, for Lelewel was still, even in the midst of the political storm, nothing more or less than an historian and an antiquarian—at best, a tool in the hands of others.

The next day (30th of January), at a meeting of both chambers, Prince Czartoryski thanked the representatives of the nation for the high trust they had reposed in him; and, in an eloquent address, exposed his political profession, which was, at that time, an object of much attention in Europe. During his long career of public life, it had been his constant aim to re-establish Poland by the instrumentality of Russia herself. The late events, he said, had entirely destroyed this expectation. The benefits his policy had procured to his country, were great. The guarantee of her nationality by the treaty of Vienna, the national spirit in the sister-countries fostered by education, the liberal charter and institutions of the kingdom; in short, the gradual preparation of a force adequate to the accomplish-



ment of the crowning act, national independence, were the fruits of his long and arduous labours. "Heaven," said the minister Kaunitz, "is a hundred years in forming a great mind for the restoration of an empire." Poland would have been restored in half that time, had Heaven blessed her in Chlopicki with a warrior as great as Czartoryski was a statesman. He was educated in England, in the principles of the enlightened Fox, then in their ascendancy. To a profound knowledge of the world, as well as to that derived from study, he joins courage superior to all trials. Virtuous, penetrating in his judgment of human affairs, remarkable for his modesty and want of pretension, notwithstanding his lofty descent; without ambition, or ambitious only of doing good;—possessing an attractive and imposing person, with a certain expression of melancholy in his countenance, especially in the eyes;—the last of those Poles who preferred electing kings to being themselves elected;—Prince Adam Czartoryski is a noble type of the misfortunes of his country, and of the services she has rendered to the world.

The Diet completed its insurrectionary legislation on the 4th of February, by declaring Poland a Constitutional Monarchy; and that throne, once desired by all the sovereigns of Europe, was again vacant. But it had now no charms for foreign princes. The road to it lay through bloody battles. Military absolutism, too, was out of credit; the idea of a

revolutionary commune was abhorred; the only wise measure would have been to proclaim one of the nation king, and this would have tripled the strength of the insurrection, and rendered it at once intelligible to the world. Instead of which, the constitutional monarchy, rendered inefficient by the distribution of its administration amongst five persons, influenced by as many different opinions, was the feeble engine opposed to the absolutism and jacobinical measures of the Russian cabinet—that cabinet which never despairs of obtaining its object, and hesitates not to lie, to poison, and to bribe in the pursuit of it. But gunpowder possesses a revivifying power, and Polish bayonets may yet repair the errors of Polish policy.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *Impression produced in Europe by the Insurrection. Result of Diplomatic Negotiations.*

THE first report of the transactions of the 29th of November, caused much amazement in Europe. The temerity of the Poles was the theme of all discourse. Ignorance had exaggerated the number of the Russian troops to at least a million of men, and it was believed that the Czar's nod would suffice to bring the Poles to obedience. The continental press was silent, partly from deficiency of correct information, partly from want of encouragement. In Germany, the land of literature, *par excellence*, it laboured under a strict censorship; and all idea of awakening, through its medium, public opinion in favour of the Poles, as on a former occasion for the Greeks, was at the moment wholly out of the question. In France, too, even the most liberal papers spoke with extreme reserve of their insurrection, and treated it as "a mere sign of the times to monarchs." A few well-turned phrases of sympathy with the brave Poles constituted all the tribute paid by the French journalists to their once glorious companions in arms.

Next to Russia, Prussia was the state most

nearly concerned in the affair. The awkward situation of her territory, and the apprehension of revolutionary movements in the Rhenish provinces, and in the Grand Duchy of Posen, caused her no small degree of perplexity. In a ministerial council immediately called at Berlin, General Grollman advised the king to march his troops into Poland, to suppress the rebellion, and at the same time to insist on Russia redressing the grievances which had excited it. The old monarch, however, did not relish the bold proposal, and being father-in-law to Nicholas, was easily persuaded to become his active ally. The Berlin Official Gazette, from which the press of other countries derived its intelligence, misrepresented and vilified the Poles and their cause. The Prussian Consul was recalled from Warsaw, and money sent to Poland was seized by the Prussian authorities. Not only were the natives returning home from France, England, and Italy imprisoned in Prussia, but even foreigners proceeding to Poland were sent back by the government. These acts of hostility were crowned by a cabinet order from the king himself, on the 6th of February, forbidding all Poles of the Grand Duchy to enter Poland on pain of forfeiting their property ; but, notwithstanding this prohibition, many individuals, of both sexes, repaired to Warsaw. Colonel Szyrma, the ex-commander of the academical legion, sent by the government to England with the manifesto, was arrested and imprisoned for several weeks at Breslau ; and, on the false report that the

Russians had taken Warsaw, he was escorted by Prussian gens-d'armes to the Polish frontier, to be delivered to the Cossacks, and this breach of the law of nations was yet further aggravated by his being compelled to sign a declaration that he would never again enter the Prussian territory\*.

Austria did not partake the anxiety of Prussia. Always apprehensive of Russia, by whose dominions she is daily becoming more encircled, she left her frontiers open to the Poles during a full month, and would probably have continued to do so, but for some revolutionary symptoms in Italy, which she dreads even more than Russian power. Influenced by Prince Constantine Czartoryski, the brother of Prince Adam, the Imperial family manifested friendly dispositions towards Poland; and all the antagonists of Prince Metternich who was in the Russian interest, seized this opportunity to endeavour to force him out of office. Many Hungarian and Bohemian noblemen protected the Poles; but, on the other hand, every Pole denounced by the agents of the Russian ambassador, Tatiszczeff, was immediately sent out of Vienna by Metternich's order, or forbidden to enter. Prince Constantine still laboured to overcome Metternich's antipathy, cherishing the hope that a victory gained by the Poles would

\* The Prussian gens-d'armes were enjoined, on delivering the colonel to the Cossacks, to take a receipt for him, as for a bale of goods; thus anticipating what has been since done by the order of the king with regard to the Polish soldiers delivered up to Russia.

induce the old emperor to give them some decided mark of friendship.

But a more effective support than that of Austria was expected from France, between whom and Poland the most friendly relations had always existed. The elder branch of the Bourbons were ever friendly to the Poles, and, since the July revolution, the younger had been considered by them as their yet more natural ally. At the very commencement of the insurrection, Monsieur Wolicki had been sent to Paris as Polish envoy. He found the ministry of Lafitte in much perplexity, harassed on one side by the republicans and legitimists, together with the affairs of Belgium; and, on the other, compelled by Russian insult, to augment the military force, which the exiled branch had left in very ill condition. Wolicki therefore was well received by Sebastiani, to whom the insurrection was a welcome occurrence; and who, having once commanded a corps in the Polish army, felt confident that some months must elapse before the Russians could restore tranquillity. The cabinet of St. Petersburg, however, always on its guard, took care to cool the nascent sympathy, by recognising the sovereignty of Louis Philippe, which it had, till then, deferred doing, under various pretences. This important point gained, Sebastiani intimated to Wolicki, that a deputation having been sent to St. Petersburg, it might be hoped that the Poles would come to a friendly arrangement with Russia, and, consequently,

the interference of a foreign power in their behalf would only prejudice their cause. The envoy explained that the deputation was merely intended to convince Europe that the Poles did not object to negotiations for peace; but that, considering the aversion of Russia to make concessions, it was but too certain that the sword alone must decide the question. On the 15th of January, Lafayette brought forward the Polish cause in the Chamber of Deputies, and energetically called upon the government not to abandon the nation. The ministry having so modified the principle of non-intervention, that it now excluded only armed interference, complied, in some degree, with the popular wish; and the Duke of Montemart was sent to St. Petersburg, with instructions to keep within the limits of the treaty of Vienna. On his way he met near Berlin a Polish agent, sent expressly to him from Warsaw. On learning from this man, that the deposition of Nicholas was in contemplation, he requested him to hurry back to Warsaw to stop the measure. On his arrival, however, the deposition was already proclaimed, and thus the duke's mission ended before he reached St. Petersburg. National sympathy now displayed itself more powerfully in France. The speeches of Lafayette, Bignon, and General Lamarque, awakened great interest in the Polish cause, and much contributed towards forming a committee, under the presidency of the former, for supplying the Poles with arms and money. The



Committee also published an address from the French nation to the Poles, and the omnipotent voice of the press was now heard in a louder tone. From these circumstances the hope rose high in Poland, that France would not desert her sister in the hour of need.

The Marquis Wielopolski had still less success in London. As the Whigs had just taken their magnanimous resolution of preserving peace at any price, the Grey administration, once so zealous for the independence of Poland, now refused even to join France in insisting upon the observance of the treaty of Vienna. On the publication of the manifesto, the English press, however, warmly advocated the rights of the Poles; and 'The Times' especially thundered against "the blasphemous, hypocritical, and barbarous manifestoes of the Russian autocrat."

The mission to Sweden was a total failure. The king, whose legitimacy was endangered by the protection afforded by Austria to Prince Vasa, was entirely under Russian influence, particularly since the visit of the Prince Royal Oscar to St. Petersburg; and the Polish envoy, Count Roman Zaluski, was not even allowed to land in the Swedish territory. Thus, after two months of harassing expectation, the Poles found themselves with no other allies than those they possessed at the commencement of the insurrection—confidence in their own valour, and trust in the Almighty protector of right.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The War.*

AT the opening of the campaign, the principal army of the Poles consisted of 35,700 infantry, 10,600 cavalry, 3000 artillery, with 136 guns, and one battalion of sappers, amounting in all to 50,000 men. The garrisons of Praga, Modlin, and Zamosc, mustered in all 10,000 troops. General Dwernicki, with a corps of 2800, and six pieces of artillery, and General Sierawski, with 3000 scythemen, were appointed to protect the left side of the Vistula above Warsaw. The troops left the environs of the capital in the beginning of February. They marched through the streets between two immense lines formed by the members of the National Government, the senators, the deputies, and a great multitude of every age, sex, and rank. Shouts of exultation, and the national hymns sung by the people, rendered this scene yet more impressive. One occurrence in particular contributed to render that day memorable in the annals of Poland. When the fourth of the line was about to depart, the soldiers, knowing how scanty was their stock of powder, and how great the number of the

enemy, threw themselves on their knees before their colonel, and entreated him to allow them to fight with the bayonet only, and to lead them wherever danger would be greatest. This regiment had been a favourite with the Grand Duke Constantine, and was so well trained, that every man belonging to it was reckoned a perfect master of arms\*. Prince Radziwill then addressed the following proclamation to the army :—" Companions in arms ! With  
" the impatience of outraged heroism, you have  
" awaited the hour for avenging your country's  
" wrongs—that hour is arrived ! Every hour of  
" inaction seemed to you a century of endurance. At  
" length your prayers have been heard. The enemies  
" of our freedom behold you—their presumption  
" prepares for you a career as glorious as those of  
" Czarnecki, Sobieski, and Kosciuszko. Confiding in  
" their numbers, the satellites of the Czar imagine  
" you terror-struck. Undeceive them—teach them  
" that the Pole never counts the battalions of his  
" enemy, but measures only the degree of his  
" arrogance†."

The force destined by the Russians for the invasion, amounted, according to their own statement, to 200,000 men, with 400 cannon. But this number, purposely overstated, in order to impress Europe

\* The privates of this regiment offered for the service of the country thirty roubles each ; the proceeds of their savings during seven years.

† Chlopicki accompanied Radziwill into the field, and in fact commanded under the name of the prince.

with an idea of their power, diminished, after their boast of finishing all by a single battle, had been silenced by Polish valour. At the commencement of the war, there were not, in fact, more than 150,000 troops, with 400 pieces of artillery. On the 6th of February, they passed the frontier of the kingdom at three different points. Prince Szachowskoi, at the head of 25,000 grenadiers, invaded the northern extremity. The great army, under the immediate command of Diebitch, followed the *chaussée* of Ostrolenka, while General Geismar, at the head of 9000 cavalry, and General Kreutz, with 6000 cavalry, entered the palatinate of Lublin. In compliance with the will of his Imperial master, Diebitch made a plan calculated to finish the whole campaign in twenty days. Szachowskoi was to cross the Vistula by Plock, and march straight to Warsaw—Geismar and Kreutz were to do the same above the capital; and the great army, advancing by the *chaussée* from Ostrolenka, were to drive towards Praga the Polish troops. These latter were joined, on their retreat, by thousands of the population, flying at the approach of the Asiatic hordes. On the 9th of February, the thaw having unexpectedly commenced, the enemy halted during the 10th, to ascertain whether it would be temporary or permanent. The latter proved the case; and Diebitch considering it hazardous to carry on the war between two such considerable rivers as the Bug and the Narew, surrounded by marshes, transferred the line of operations to the *chaussée* of Siedlce. On the 13th,

Rosen made an unsuccessful attempt to cross the river Liviec. Peter Wysocki, with one battalion and two pieces of cannon, opposed his passage during the whole day. On that memorable occasion the first gun was fired by the Poles, a shot which was to decide the fate of their country. In the evening they abandoned their position, which was the only point where any local obstacle could impede the march of the Russians to Praga. During the three following days the great army remained stationary, in order to allow the two wings to come up.

General Geismar advanced rapidly through the palatinate of Lublin towards the Vistula, intending to cross at Pulawy. General Dwernicki, to whom the defence in this quarter was entrusted, passed to the right bank, and on the 14th, he fell in with his entire corps, near the town of Stoczek. The Polish force consisted of only 2000 cavalry and 800 infantry, both newly equipped,—but they were the descendants of those Poles who once told their king (Sobieski) that “should heaven fall, they would prop it with their lances.\*” After a short cannonade, Dwernicki, exclaiming “Poland is not lost while we live!” attacked two Russian columns

\* The Russians are robbing even the history of Poland, and have lately made use of the same expression in their negotiations with the Circassians. Bossuet thought so highly of the Polish cavalry, that he even said that its defeat would be a proof that Heaven had withdrawn its favour.—See his “Discours sur l’Histoire Universelle.”

with indescribable impetuosity, and the victory was decided in less than a quarter of an hour. The Russians fled in disorder, leaving 400 killed and 500 prisoners, besides 11 guns. The loss of the victors was trifling, only 16 killed and 18 wounded. This first success was hailed with the utmost joy. Soldiers and officers mutually embraced, and Dwernicki reminding his men that he had discharged his promise of leading them at once against their enemies, congratulated them on their having fulfilled their's, by beating them. Geismar did not stop in his flight until he reached the great army, but Dwernicki could not pursue, as the corps of Kreutz had already crossed the Vistula, and was advancing towards Warsaw. He therefore re-passed the river, and overtook Kreutz at Nowawies on the 17th of February. A combat there ensued still shorter than the last, in which the Polish lancers soon broke the squadrons of Russian dragoons; and Kreutz having lost four pieces of artillery and several hundred prisoners, hastened to re-cross the river. The approach of night saved him from total destruction. Dwernicki, however, dared not profit by his victory, as another Russian corps threatened to cross near Warsaw.

On the 17th, the great army again moved forward; the Poles retiring, in order to concentrate their forces in the environs of Praga. The same day, Rosen's corps of 30,000 men came up with a Polish division under General Skrzynecki, occupying a strong posi-

tion in the marshes at Dobre. A brilliant action took place. Eight thousand Poles resisted for nine hours a force four times their number. It was on this occasion that the fourth of the line performed their first exploit in arms, by attacking in single companies the Russian battalions, and driving them back at the point of the bayonet. The Russians lost 1500 killed and wounded ; the Poles comparatively few. Skrzynecki did not quit his position until he had ascertained that General Zymirski, retiring along the chaussée, was no longer in danger of being intercepted on his way to Praga. On the 19th, the Polish troops drew up on the plains of Grochow, where the ex-dictator had determined to risk an engagement. Zymirski and Szembek's divisions were stationed on both sides of the chaussée, near the inn of Waver, where the enemy was expected to emerge from the wood, and were ordered to engage in the conflict only so far as should suffice to draw the enemy to Grochow. About ten in the morning the Pahlen corps arrived, as was anticipated, and was preparing to occupy a position on the skirts of the wood, when Szembek attacked them with such impetuosity that they were thrown back with disorder, but on being reinforced they returned and pressed him so closely, that Zymirski found it necessary to bring up his division, when the Russians were a second time repulsed, and lost two standards and six cannon. They next had recourse to their numerous cavalry, and charged with twenty squadrons, but



General Lubieski, at the head of two regiments of lancers, at once dispersed them. Chlopicki finding that the combat was not proceeding according to the plan he laid down, ordered the generals to withdraw to Grochow, and the retreat was executed in perfect order, a general cannonade on both sides terminating the action.

On the following day the Polish troops took a very strong station. Their right wing was protected by the Vistula and the marshes, and on the left of the chaussée stood a little wood of elders, bidding defiance as it were to the opposite forest, which seemed ready to fall upon it. Here was the central point of their position, to which the wood was the key, for the enemy's columns could not advance along the chaussée whilst it remained in possession of the Poles; the whole formed a semi-circle, of which Praga was the focus, its strength increasing as its radii shortened, whilst the elder wood interposed a barrier which threatened to divide the forces of the enemy. The position of the Russians was equally strong, being protected by the Vistula, the marshes, and the forest, at the edge of which a range of hills formed a kind of natural fortification, well adapted for their artillery, which, therefore, besides being thrice as numerous as that of the Poles, had now also the advantage in position. Yet the latter not only maintained its ground, but gained immortal honour.

Early in the morning of the 20th, the Russians

opened the battle by a formidable cannonade, which they kept up till noon. Diebitch then, with his infantry, made repeated attacks on the elder wood, especially directing his operations on the left side. The 4th of the line defended this post of honour, and as the enemy's battalions approached they were successively repulsed at the point of the bayonet. Many Russian regiments were on that day reduced to single battalions. At length, exhausted by unsuccessful attacks, the enemy terminated their efforts with a cannonade along their whole line. Diebitch then discovered that his expectations of victory, by means of masses of infantry and numerous artillery, were vain. The gallant conduct of Dwernicki had frustrated a considerable part of his plan, and his troops, fatigued, and wanting provisions, sensibly diminished. He found himself compelled to await the arrival of Szachowskoi's corps, and the next day condescended to demand a suspension of hostilities for three days, under pretext of burying the dead. General Witt, who was sent for this purpose to the Polish camp, taking occasion to express his astonishment that two friendly nations should shed their blood in a quarrel brought about by a band of mere youths, was answered by General Krukowiecki as became a Pole, " That far from condemning the heroic self-devotion of their sons, the fathers would endeavour to consummate, by their judgment and experience, the virtuous and courageous deed they had begun." An armistice

of only three hours was then accorded. The Polish camp presented just then a very remarkable spectacle. Fathers, mothers, and sisters came to embrace their sons and brothers, and to look upon the field of glory which might yet prove their tomb and that of their country. The vicinity of Warsaw afforded great conveniences to the Polish troops: the wounded received every assistance, ladies of the highest rank superintending. Their camp was abundantly supplied with comforts, and even luxuries; whilst the enemy's soldiers, in spite of the violence with which they endeavoured to extort contributions from the inhabitants, actually lacked provisions, and fed only upon boiled barley or rye. The national government also took the soldiers' wives under its protection, and the Diet voted ten millions of florins, to be distributed in money or land amongst the troops, after the campaign should be over; but they, when made acquainted with this liberal measure, feeling that their task was not yet accomplished, answered with sublime simplicity, "Provide us with bread and brandy, and keep the money for more urgent purposes."

Three days passed without any engagement. The position of the Poles, admirably adapted for defence, but not for attack, was the cause of their inaction. Diebitch also was unwilling to undertake any thing before the arrival of Prince Szachowskoi, who was marching day and night to join the triumphant entry, which he had been led to expect, into the

rebellious capital. General Jankowski having been despatched from Grochow, with two regiments of infantry and two of cavalry, met Szachowskoi's corps at Neporent, on the 24th. After a short skirmish, the Poles retired to Bialolenka, three miles from Praga, where, being reinforced by two infantry regiments, an obstinate combat ensued, which lasted till night-fall, when the enemy remained in possession of the village. Szachowskoi's force consisted of 25,000 of the best Russian troops, and their advance on the left of the Poles, compelled Chlopicki to detach a third brigade of infantry from the army at Grochow to Bialolenka, under General Krukowiecki; but no more fighting took place that day.

At night a council of war was held in a solitary house of the devastated Grochow. "What is to be done to-morrow? Shall we retreat?" asked Chlopicki, "and leave poisoned provisions behind us?" The latter proposal was rejected by all. The retreat was stated to be impracticable, as the soldiers would never consent to retire without first risking a general engagement, though, in case of defeat, destruction seemed inevitable, there being only one bridge across the Vistula, which was, besides, liable to be destroyed at any moment by the breaking up of the ice. The fortifications of Praga, too, were either commanded by the adjacent hills, or not strong enough to protect a discomfited army. Still the soldiers would not hear of retreating.

“ We cannot now,” continued Chlopicki, “ hope  
“ to conquer nearly 145,000 men, and our only  
“ alternative is to die.” “ Die,” replied Skrzynecki ;  
and the other officers joined in the reply—“ Die  
“ sword in hand on freedom’s field.” *Pulchrumque  
mori in armis.*

The character of a nation is best exhibited in the hour of danger. The Romans proved worthy of their fame after the catastrophe of Cannæ. Once more, the Poles showed themselves the unflinching defenders of that liberty of which they had so long stood the vanguard, when, on the night of the 24th of February, they deliberately resolved to die for the sacred rights bestowed upon them by God. Standards inscribed with the words, “ For our  
“ liberty and your’s,” were distributed to the regiments, and with these hallowed ensigns they moved forward to meet the Russian columns.

On the 25th, at day-break, General Krukowiecki attacked the enemy in Bialolenka with the impetuosity suited to the ardent spirit that animated his soldiers. Szachowskoi evacuated the place in disorder, leaving behind 2,000 killed and wounded, and six pieces of artillery. Krukowiecki at first pursued, but the Russian general, opposing him with a part only of his troops, soon concealed himself with the remainder in the wood, and by noon had entirely disappeared. This was the time when Krukowiecki should have joined the army at Grochow, and he was about to do so when he

received an order from Chlopicki to continue the pursuit. On hearing of this attack Diebitch immediately gave the signal for general battle. His first object was to get possession at any rate of the elder wood, and under cover of the artillery, he pushed forward a division of foot, which, however, was dispersed by the Poles before it had advanced half way. A valley, a mile wide, separated the two armies. In a moment, far as the eye could reach, it was covered with Russian battalions. The Muscovite soldiers are trained, by a brutal discipline, to fear more their officers than their enemy; and on this occasion, though exposed to an admirably conducted fire, twenty-six battalions resolutely advanced, and attacked Skrzynecki's division on the left of the elder wood; but the 4th line kept its oath; other regiments did no less; and of all these twenty-six battalions only a wreck found safety in flight. They were replaced by as many more, and the elder wood was taken five times, and as often re-conquered by the Poles. The carnage had continued five hours, Chlopicki leading on every attack, when precisely at two o'clock, General Zymirski, whilst defending the right of the wood, was reached by a cannon-ball. His division fell into disorder, and the enemy had gained possession of the post, when Chlopicki attacked them with the grenadier guards, and again drove them back. But after this conflict, during which two horses were killed under him, and himself slightly wounded, the grenadiers, assailed in

their turn by a superior force, once more abandoned the post to the enemy. The danger was imminent, as in this case Skrzynecki could scarcely hope to maintain the other side of the wood, and the enemy would thus gain the object of their deadly struggle. But Chlopicki was now in his element. Swift as his own thought, he brought forward a brigade of Szembek's division, and, at the same moment with Skrzynecki, made so irresistible an onset that the enemy again abandoned the wood in the utmost confusion. Chlopicki, to whom Napoleon once presented a dart, in compliment to his eagle eye, then perceived that the Russians were exhausted, and that the moment was arrived for striking a decisive blow. Exclaiming, in the exultation of certain success, " Now will I beat that boaster ! Bring up the " cavalry !—the cavalry !" he had shouted a second time, when his horse was knocked down by a cannon ball, and himself wounded in both legs.

*" Là tombe un vieux guerrier, qui, né dans les alarmes,  
Eut les camps pour patrie, et pour amour ses armes."*

He was carried from the field at half-past two, borne on the crossed weapons of the scythemen, and the melancholy sight filled the soldiers, and even the officers with despair. There was, however, no time for lamentation ; for at that moment Szachowski joined Diebitch with the whole corps of grenadiers, whilst the Poles remained without a reinforcement, Krukowiecki having only then received orders to



advance. Diebitch, as though aware of Chlopicki's fall, prepared for one more effort, and, as the grenadiers advanced, preceded by a long train of light artillery, their columns suddenly opened, and a cloud of cavalry poured into the valley. A division of lancers charged Skrzynecki's battalions, but without success; and after strewing the ground with their corpses, the remainder fled. A second division of hussars attacked Szembek's corps on the right of the chaussée, and, was alike repulsed. A third, the cuirassiers, called "invincible\*," marched up the chaussée, and, profiting by a wide interval between the Polish columns, passed the first line. Prince Albert of Prussia's regiment led this column with blind intrepidity, and a squadron of Polish lancers, which charged them, without being able to arrest their course, was hurried with them along the chaussée.

Meantime a scene of tumult arose on the road to Praga. Prince Radziwill had issued no orders since the fall of Chlopicki, and Szembek, who should have assumed the command, had been overthrown with his horse, by the invincible cuirassiers. Waggon's loaded with the wounded men were pressing onwards, surrounded by civilians and ladies, who had come from Warsaw to assist the sufferers. Baggage and ammunition waggons also were hurrying thither, and, to complete the confusion, several

\* From having been the first who entered Paris in 1814.

powder chests blew up. Praga was now set on fire, in order to uncover the cannon on the walls. It was whispered that the Russians had taken it, and the report, echoed in Warsaw, found its way into the Prussian Gazette, and spread through Europe. The President of the Government hastened to the scene of danger, ready to encounter death, as became the representative of a nation in her mortal agony.

In the meantime, the cuirassiers had imprudently advanced to the second Polish line, but were effectually repulsed by a battalion, whilst Colonel Prondzynski poured on them a shower of Congreve rockets, and General Kicki attacked them with the 2nd regiment of lancers, and two of the Zamoyski squadrons. Assailed from every quarter, the flying cuirassiers met as they fled the division of Skrzynecki, and a carnage as great as that in the elder wood took place. They would not yield, and all perished. The Polish artillery then advancing, poured a grape fire on the Russian battalions which were coming up, though too late, in support of the cuirassiers, and completed the discomfiture of Diebitch, whose men were now in full retreat. Skrzynecki, the hero of the day, at length confident of success, urged Prince Radziwill to renew the attack, more especially as Krukowiecki had just arrived at Praga with 15,000 fresh troops; but since the fall of Chlopicki, the prince was not to be persuaded to undertake any thing upon his own responsibility, and fearing also that the bridge across the Vistula might be broken

down, he gave the word for retiring. Thus both armies drew off in opposite directions, as driven by some unseen influence from the spot of that day's butchery. Leaving Praga in flames, and three battalions to defend the fortified advanced post of the bridge, the remainder of the Polish army re-entered Warsaw in the night. To convey an idea of that day's conflict, it is enough to remark, that there was scarcely a general or staff officer amongst them who had not his horse killed or wounded under him; two-thirds of the officers, and 8000 privates, were wounded, and 4000 killed. The Russians, according to their own statement, lost, during the three engagements on the 19th, 20th, and 25th, 30,000 killed and wounded\*. They suffered most on the last day, in their assaults on the elder wood, which has since been called "the forest of the dead†." Amongst those who perished in this memorable combat, Count Louis Mysielski, who had hastened from the Grand Duchy of Posen, to enter the 4th of the line, as a volunteer, stands distinguished both for his gallantry and the remarkable circumstances of his death. Three of his fingers being carried away by a grape shot, he twisted his cravat round the hand,—pierced

\* One of Diebitch's staff related, that on seeing so great a number of wounded, the Russian officers clasped their hands, and exclaimed, "The hand of God is upon us!"

† The elder wood has lately been cut down, by the order of Nicholas, with the view to silence the voice of history. Tyranny and folly go here side by side.

in the foot by a musket ball, he bound up the wound, and still advanced. Whilst in the act of nailing up one of the enemy's guns, another grape shot shattered his knee, and, as his companions were bearing him away from the field, a cannon-ball terminated his heroic career.

“ Un ange me soutint sur son aile invisible  
“ Pour raconter au monde un sublime trépas,  
“ Qu'a vu ce siècle impie . . . et qu'il ne croira pas.”

For ever memorable will be the battle of Grochow, where 145,000 Russians, with 400 cannon, were not able to vanquish 35,000 Poles (after the departure of Krukowiecki they amounted to no more), with only 100 cannon. Had not Chlopicki been disabled, the Poles would have been victorious at Grochow; and the Russian empire, which had collected all its disposable force, might have been overthrown. Considered in this light, the battle was perhaps as important as any in modern times, since, had Russia been defeated, the condition of the world at large might have been changed. Even under existing circumstances, the defeat at Grochow, in its result, may be compared to Sobieski's victory over the Turks at Vienna (1683); for, as the latter have never since advanced, but gradually lost their former conquests, so, in this hard-won struggle, Russia received a blow, the effects of which she will for ever feel.

Dwernicki being absent, Kreutz dared not again cross the Vistula; but his vanguard, under Prince Adam of Wirtemberg, committed every species of vandalism in the palatinate of Lublin. This man, the son of Prince Adam Czartoryski's sister, had, before the insurrection, served in the Polish army, which he then quitted, giving his word never to bear arms against Poland; yet he now, with two regiments of dragoons, attacked Pulawy, where his mother and grandmother were actually then residing. Colonel Lagowski and Julius Malachowski, with some of the new cavalry, and 200 sharp shooters, had passed the Vistula, surprised his party, and made two squadrons prisoners; but on the approach of Kreutz corps, they retired, leaving Pulawy (one of the finest residences in Europe, and adorned with precious works of art) to the fury of the prince, by whom it was set on fire, and soon presented only a mass of ruins. He even caused several persons suspected of having taken part in the late action, to be hanged, and, to crown his atrocities, discharged two cannons at the princely dwelling, intended, as he said, for his mother\* and grandmother, who were at that time

\* The Princess of Wirtemberg, his mother, is now living a refugee in France, Nicholas having confiscated her estates in favour of her son Prince Adam, who did not scruple to accept the gift. He, however, acquainted her with the step of his and her Imperial master, signifying, at the same time, that he was disposed to give her a portion of his revenue. To this she replied, with the dignity becoming a princess of the house of Czartoryski, *viz.*—"Master I know not; son I have none."

waiting on the wounded soldiers to whom they had given shelter. He also carried off from the palace a young lady conspicuous by her patriotism and beauty. When Dwernicki heard of these outrages, he hastened to Pulawy, from which the enemy retreated at his approach. As a Pole, he felt it incumbent on him to offer his tribute of respect to “the venerable lady of the castle ;” but when he beheld the scene of desolation, he and his officers advanced in dread, lest they should find that the princess herself had fallen a victim to her savage grandson. Great was their astonishment when she appeared in the porch, and addressed them with, “How happy am I that God has granted me to see you once again before I die.” Then presenting them to her ladies, she continued—“Do not be surprised at seeing us in the best clothes left us by the enemy. We are arrayed in our funeral attire ;” and pointed to the holes pierced in the walls by the Russian ball. It was with difficulty that Dwernicki could prevail on the venerable lady, eighty years of age, to retire into Galicia, while he hurried forward to avenge the insulted feeling of the nation. He overtook the rear-guard of Kreutz at Kurow, killed 200 of his men, and took 300 prisoners, besides the five pieces of cannon, which he had brought into action. The following day he came up with him again in Lublin, and drove him from the town. Kreutz then joined Diebitch, and Dwernicki proceeded to Zamosc, increasing his company on the march by volunteers from Galicia. From Zamosc he had to approach Volhynia, sup-

posed to be on the eve of insurrection. This officer, who, with only 3000 newly levied soldiers, had defeated two Russian corps, much superior in number, greatly influenced the fortune of the campaign ; for Diebitch concluding, from his success, that he must at least have 15,000 men, detached 20,000 under Toll, the most able of his generals, to oppose him.

On the 26th of February, before dawn, the National Government summoned a council of general officers, when Prince Radziwill, acknowledging his errors, and his unfitness to remain general-in-chief, resigned the post. Chlopicki\* recommended that he should be replaced by Skrzynecki, the hero of Dobro and of the forest of the dead ; the other generals elected him, and the Diet confirmed their choice the same day.

John Skrzynecki, a native of Galicia, then about forty-five years of age, began his military career in 1809, as volunteer in an infantry regiment raised by Prince Constantine Czartoryski. At the battle of *Arcis sur l'Aube*, in 1813, he saved the life of Napoleon, who then uttered this prophetic remark : —“ *C'est un commandant qui commandera.*” Under the Russian government he was colonel of the 8th of the line, and his independence of character, as well as his military science, drew upon him the hatred of

\* Chlopicki soon after went to Cracow, where he remained during the war, not being able to take any further part in it on account of his wounds.



the Grand Duke Constantine. When the Duke of Wellington visited Warsaw, on his way to St. Petersburg, Constantine presented Skrzynecki to him with these words:—" This officer can always tell " what is in the English or French press, but " knows nothing of what passes in his own regi- " ment." Tall in stature, with a noble and chivalrous expression of countenance, his courage rises superior to every trial, but it is rather of a resigned than sanguine nature, analogous to the mysticism of his religious faith. When asked by the Diet on what plan he proposed to carry on the war, his reply was truly characteristic :—" Let the deputies recollect the " senators of Rome, who died in their curule chairs—" for myself, I will be their Fabius Cunctator." By Skrzynecki's recommendation, the Colonels Prondzynski and Chrzanowski were made generals ; and with their assistance he concerted the plan of the coming campaign, attending first to the re-organization and recruiting of the army. The soldiers, who had hitherto known their chiefs only by name, saw Skrzynecki daily amongst them, training them by moral and military discipline. He rewarded merit, promoted talent, and endeavoured to inspire them with courage superior to all misfortunes. Amongst other regulations established with this object, he forbade any order of merit to be conferred on officers or soldiers without the express approval of both, nor did he omit any opportunity of winning their love.

Since the night of the 25th, the Polish cavalry had occupied positions a few miles above and below Warsaw, the infantry and artillery being encamped either within the walls, or near them. All was prepared for resistance, in case the enemy should attempt to pass the still frozen Vistula, the left bank of which, at that spot, commands the right, together with Praga and its environs ; and a battery of twenty-four pounders was therefore placed on the left bank, in order to cover the adjacent plains and overpower any hostile guns that might be pointed against Praga. This city was divided into two parts ; the one bordering on the Vistula, and strongly fortified, formed the advanced post of the bridge ; the other, at a greater distance, and not fortified, was set on fire, and abandoned to the Russians. A false report of the capture of Praga, and even of Warsaw, had gone the round of the European papers. But though encamped in its presence, no one knew better than Diebitch himself, how far he was from accomplishing the object of his desires. Of Praga he possessed little beyond its ashes, which refused even shelter to his men : before him lay ramparts defended by heavy cannon, and brave men determined to die rather than surrender ; beyond was the Vistula, which might open to swallow his artillery and men, should they attempt to pass ; and beyond that the yet stronger rampart of Polish breasts and bayonets. Like another Suwaroff, he gazed for some days upon the beautiful capital of Poland,

and then retired to Grochow, where an altar had been raised on the field of battle, at which thousands of Russian soldiers daily raised their discordant voices in prayer. For what did they pray? The Czar best knows, he who stands between them and their God, and sends them forth to the murder of nations. Kneeling in the midst of them, the field-marshal also prayed. Did he supplicate his idol, Nicholas, for pardon, that he had not conquered the rebellious capital? Such must have been his prayers, for he interrupted them only by his attempts to take Warsaw by treacherous means. He first resorted to the Russian policy usual in such cases. Two Polish prisoners of war were dismissed by him with a gift of four ducats each, and enjoined to make it known amongst their troops that the same sum would be given to all Poles deserting to the Russians. On their arrival in Warsaw the two soldiers communicated this transaction to Skrzynecki, and deposited the money in the public treasury. In the order of the day Skrzynecki mentioned their good conduct, and the baseness of Diebitch. Bribery having failed, the field-marshal next attempted, in nightly excursions, to burn the bridge; and baffled in this also, he left Grochow on the 5th of March, and transferred his headquarters to Siennica, forty miles distant, General Geismar, with the rear-guard, remaining at Waver. On the 11th of March the thaw commenced, and for a time suspended all military operations.

The retreat of Diebitch, and the advance of Dwernicki on Zamosc, opened the eyes of Europe to the real results of the fight of Grochow ; and the reports of Russian victories, circulated by the Prussian gazettes, were found to have been mere inventions. It is a melancholy consideration, that even in the nineteenth century, might should still constitute right ; but it certainly appeared as if victory had added yet more sanctity to the claims of the Poles, so warmly did every generous heart now sympathise with “ *le peuple des héros*,” headed in their sublime struggle by the noblest of their countrymen. The tide of public opinion now setting against Russia, had made a wide breach in her power ; and had the other governments of Europe chosen to drive her back to her Asiatic steppes, and to prevent the murder of a nation, the time for doing so was not yet passed. But they contented themselves with secretly exulting at her humiliation ; and the French cabinet, which had pronounced, at the commencement of the insurrection, that “ *la Pologne était destinée à périr*,” even went so far as to regret the success that now attended the Polish arms.

Prince Czartoryski, whose diplomatic talents are well known, advised Skrzynecki to rest his hopes of the independence of Poland solely on the national troops, until some brilliant victory should tempt the European cabinets to interfere. But as the thaw suspended for a time all offensive operations, Skrzynecki, wishing to relieve his men from the fatigue of

incessantly watching so many different points, determined to try whether he could not amuse Diebitch by negotiation, so as to induce him to suspend his preparations for passing the Vistula. For this purpose he sent Colonel Mycielski, under pretext of an exchange of prisoners, to the Russian camp, where, in an interview he had with Diebitch, the latter observed, “ that the Poles had entered on a hopeless struggle; that their army having set the example of insurrection, ought to be the first to set that of submission, after which things might be restored to their former state; and that he desired this on account of the sincere esteem he felt for the nation.” To this communication, which, under the mask of humanity, was designed to disunite the army and the people, Skrzynecki answered by letter, that “ before submission could be thought of, the Emperor must give positive guarantees for the observance of the treaty of Vienna;—as for the army, it would never separate its interests from those of the people; but would perish, if necessary, to preserve that legal state of things for which all had united.” Diebitch replied, “ that Russia would listen to no proposal until the act of dethronement should be abrogated, and the Diet which proclaimed it dissolved.” Upon this demand the National Government would have broken off the negotiations; but Skrzynecki opposing, as he said, humanity to arrogance, wrote once more: “ Before we can enter into the question of dethrone-

“ ment, Russia must give us the most solemn and  
“ unquestionable guarantees ; otherwise we may be  
“ called inconstant and light-minded, although our  
“ mistrust is justified by the perjuries of half a  
“ century.” This last letter happily ended the  
negociations, which Diebitch now pronounced use-  
less. The nation never approved them, remembering the Polish proverb, “ he who once quarrels  
“ with the Czar must either fight for his life or pine  
“ away in Siberia.”

By imprudently dividing his troops into detachments, Diebitch afforded Skrzynecki a fair opportunity of acting up to his words. During the night of the 30th of March, he left the environs of Warsaw with 35,000 men, and, to conceal their march, the bridge over which they passed was covered with straw. Veiled by fog and darkness they approached, unseen, the inn of Waver, where General Geismar lay entrenched with 8000 men. Taken by surprise, the Russians fled along the chaussée, losing 2000 killed and wounded, 3000 prisoners, and four pieces of cannon ; and at Dembe Wielkie, about twenty-five miles from Warsaw, joined General Rosen, commanding there 20,000 men. At five P.M. the Poles came up with them, and found them in a strong position, protected on one side by a wood and marshes, and on the other by a marshy river, the ground also on both sides of the chaussée being so loose as to be impassable. Skrzynecki, however, immediately attacked him. Two regiments, the 4th



and 8th of the line, first advanced along the *chaussée*, and although able to bring only two cannons to act, they at length dislodged the Russians from the village. Eight squadrons then charged, and in a quarter of an hour the Russian battalions were broken, their cavalry cut to pieces, the artillery taken, and Rosen himself compelled to seek refuge in a neighbouring wood. Darkness prevented the Poles from pursuing, and they passed the night on the field. At day-break they moved forward. A division of cavalry, headed by the 4th lancers, of which one squadron was commanded by Count Ladislaus Zamoyski, composed the vanguard, and Rosen, though a full night's march in advance, was soon overtaken. To save a part of his corps he sacrificed the rest, and stationed some battalions, at intervals, in the wood, to check the Polish cavalry, who, however, galloped through their fire, and soon overcame all resistance. Amazed at such boldness, the Russian soldiers threw down their arms, attributing their success to the displeasure of the Virgin, an image of whom had been lost by General Geismar at Stoczek. Zamoyski, at the head of his squadron, which did in fact the work of a regiment, achieved, near Kaluszyn, the most brilliant exploit of the day, defeating three battalions successively, and himself taking three standards with his own hand. Rosen retired in the night to Siedlce, beyond the river Kostrzyn, and joined the corps of Pahlen II., just arrived from the interior of Russia. The same day



Skrzynecki took up his head-quarters at Kaluszyn. In these two days the enemy lost 14,000 prisoners, and 5000 killed and wounded, together with 15 pieces of cannon, 16,000 muskets, and many ammunition and baggage waggons. The loss of the Poles in killed and wounded was very small. Four thousand Lithuanians, whom they took prisoners, recollecting, at last, that they also were sons of Poland, volunteered their service. Had Skrzynecki taken the advice given him by Prondzynski, and immediately pursued Rosen to Siedlce, to complete the destruction of his corps, which had now joined that of Pahlen II., the whole of the Russian force might possibly have been annihilated ; for Diebitch with his 50,000 men, hemmed in between the river Wieprz, the Vistula, and the Polish army, must have been ultimately defeated ; or he might, as Chrzanowski urged, have struck a still more decisive blow, by leading his army, elated with its recent victory, to attack Diebitch himself. But he was too cautious to adopt either of these counsels ; objecting, to the first, the danger of being cut off from Warsaw ; and, to the second, that the roads were impassable, especially for artillery. The position occupied by Diebitch, near Macieiowice, was the very spot where Kosciuszko fell ; and this was, perhaps, another reason why Skrzynecki, whom the press already called a second Kosciuszko, would undertake nothing in that quarter. On learning the defeat of his two corps, Diebitch caused the preparations

made for the passage of the Vistula to be burnt, and hastened to Siedlce, in order there to collect his forces. It was now in Skrzynecki's power to prevent their junction, and on the 10th of April he began to take measures to effect that object. Prondzynski, with 8000 men, was to attack the right wing, Skrzynecki to advance by the chaussée upon the centre, and Chrzanowski to cut off the retreat by the bridge over the Muchawiec. Prondzynski was the first who arrived, and he waited several hours for the other corps. In presence of an enemy four times his own strength, and compelled to attack, or to risk being himself attacked on his retreat, he chose the first alternative, and as he approached the village of Iganie, encountered ten Russian squadrons prepared for the charge. General Kicki fell on them with one regiment of lancers, cut many to pieces, and made 400 prisoners. Prondzynski next led on his battalions, explaining to them, as they went, the superiority of the bayonet to the musket on this occasion. The shock was terrible; 3000 Russians were killed and 4000 taken, besides five cannon and 4000 muskets. Two regiments (the 13th and 14th light infantry), called by the Emperor Nicholas, since the last Turkish war, "The lions of "Warna," perished to a man. Three Russian colonels were also killed, and three taken prisoners. The loss of the Poles amounted to 500 killed and wounded. The battle was over, and the enemy had already effected their retreat by the bridge

before mentioned, when Skrzynecki and Chrzanowski arrived, their delay having been caused by the badness of the roads. The town of Siedlce might still have been carried without much difficulty; but Skrzynecki, knowing that within its walls were 15,000 men wounded, or sick of the cholera, abandoned the idea. That disease had now also reached the Poles, and proved more destructive than the sword. The following day, they abandoned Iganie, and returned to their former position near Kaluszyn.

In the meantime, General Uminski having obtained some advantages in the palatinate of Plock, over the imperial guard, joined the main body of the army, and was appointed to defend the passage of the Liviec at Vengrow, where, on the 13th of April, a severe engagement took place. Here again Polish valour overcame superiority of numbers; three squadrons of lancers defeating six of Russian dragoons, and making 400 prisoners, whilst a newly formed regiment of infantry successfully resisted through the day several of the enemy's regiments.

A fortnight of mutual inaction succeeded, during which Skrzynecki endeavoured to reinforce Dwer-nicki, in order to favour the insurrection in Volhynia. He therefore ordered General Sierawski, then stationed with 6000 new levies, chiefly armed with scythes, on the left of the Vistula, to advance on Zamosc, but, if possible, to avoid an engagement. Sierawski, however, had no sooner crossed the river,

(on the 17th of April), than he was attacked by General Kreutz, with 12,000 men, and notwithstanding the inferiority of his own force, successfully resisted him during the greater part of the day. Towards evening, in hopes of deciding the victory, the gallant veteran made a charge with two squadrons of Kalisz, and had already taken the enemy's cannon, when his troops were seized with a panic, and fled, thus compelling him to give the signal for retreat. It was, however, executed in good order, and the next day they reached the Vistula at Kazimir. There was no bridge. The cavalry had swum across, and a part of the infantry had already passed in boats when the Russians came up. Young Julius Malachowski, with 200 rifles, for a time covered the retreat; but at length the greater part of his men having been killed or disabled, he seized a scythe, and shouting, "this was Kosciuszko's weapon! Brave soldiers, on with me!"—rushed upon the nearest battalion, and put it to flight. Short was the triumph—he fell pierced with many balls, and the scythemen fled. A thousand Poles perished, more however in the waves than by the sword. The Russian loss was as great. Yet the Poles called it their defeat, and justly. It was a moral check.

On the 24th, after his long repose, Diebitch again began to act on the offensive. The Poles being desirous to choose their ground for the next battle, retired before him, General Dembinski, with a rear-guard, making a brilliant stand at Kuflew, to cover

the retreat. On the 25th, they reached Dembe Wielkie. General Gielgud, commanding their rear-guard of 10,000 troops, having profited by an advantageous position at Minsk to arrest the progress of the Russians, with much loss on their side, during the whole afternoon, joined Skrzynecki at Dembe Wielkie in the night, who was desirous to entice Diebitch once more to Grochow. This latter, however, had no inclination to revisit the field where so many of his men had perished ; and having advanced but three miles beyond Minsk, withdrew, on the 28th, to his entrenched position at Siedlce.

A second inaction of a fortnight intervened. Important motives compelled Diebitch to suspend thus his military operations. It seems that his late movement was undertaken solely in compliance with the express order of the Emperor Nicholas, who, ignorant of the difficulties attending the present war, insisted on its being immediately brought to a conclusion. The excuse Diebitch offered for his late promenade, was want of provisions. The real cause, however, was the disorganized state of his troops. Rosen's corps, amounting to 30,000 men, no longer existed ; that of Pahlen, equally strong, had been half destroyed by the Polish arms, and was daily decimated by cholera. Added to this, the destruction of Geismar's 9000 men, the death of all the wounded by want of hospitals, the rising in Lithuania, and the presence of Dwernicki in Volhynia

threatening to interrupt the communication with the interior, were sufficient motives for waiting until the success of the Russian troops in those two provinces should enable them to send him a further reinforcement. Skrzynecki, on his part, was not disposed to molest Diebitch in his fortified position ; but more than ever anxious for the safety of Dwernicki's corps since the defeat of Sierawski, he sent him 5000 of his own best men under the command of General Chrzanowski. This corps, on the 8th of May, surprised at Kock 4000 Russians, who had been similarly dispatched by Diebitch to assist Kreutz, and took 800 prisoners. At Firlei, they were opposed by Kreutz himself, whom they compelled to draw off with a loss of 400 prisoners, and continued their march, without interruption, Kreutz hanging on their rear till the 10th, when he again attacked them at Levartow on the banks of the river Wieprz. After a severe fight of several hours, Chrzanowski succeeded in crossing the river, not only with his own troops, but with his prisoners. One infantry company, left by him in a monastery, to arrest the enemy, and enjoined rather to die than to surrender before the passage should be effected, as long as their powder lasted, made so admirable a defence, that Kreutz, deceived as to their numbers, brought up many battalions and several pieces of artillery : he could not refrain from uttering an expression of respect, when only 111 men at length surrendered to

his arms. Owing to the winding of the river, Chrzanowski had to cross it again no less than three times ; and after marching fifty-seven miles in three days, during which he had several encounters with the enemy, arrived at Zamosc on the 11th of May, bringing with him 1200 prisoners, 400 of whom enlisted in his corps. This was one of the finest operations of the campaign, but did not attain its object ; for Dwernicki had long since left this fortress for Volhynia, where it was now too late to attempt joining him. Had the three generals been able to have combined their forces, they would, in all probability, have destroyed the corps of Kreutz, and carried on a successful contest beyond the Bug. By whose fault the opportunity was lost, let the event show.

The Diet had been discussing the relation in which the kingdom stood to the insurrectionized sister countries, and also the degree of retaliation to be exercised upon the enemy. Hitherto the Russian prisoners had been treated with unparalleled kindness, and their wounded tended by Polish ladies with as much care as they bestowed on those of their own countrymen. This humane conduct was ill requited by the Russians, as the ruins of Pulawy and the number of Polish prisoners hanged or shot in cold blood sufficiently testified ; but after the battle of Iganie and Diebitch's late reconnoissance, several children and pregnant women were found murdered. In some instances the breasts of women



were cut off, and two Cossacks were actually seized bearing about them the proofs of their revolting barbarity. Beyond even these atrocities, the ukases of Nicholas against the insurgents of Lithuania and the other provinces,—so cruel that they were not at first believed in Europe to be genuine,—seemed to demand some protective measure of reprisal. One was proposed by the Chamber of Deputies, but rejected by the Senate as unworthy of the Polish name; and the following resolutions in regard to Lithuania, Volhynia, Podolia, and Ukraina, were finally thought sufficient. 1st. That all portions of those provinces formerly belonging to ancient Poland have now recovered the rights and privileges inexpressibly possessed by them before the first partition. 2ndly. Wherever the inhabitants of provinces shall rise to shake off the Russian yoke, whosoever shall endeavour to replace that yoke, or do any thing prejudicial to the insurrection, shall be considered a traitor, and punished accordingly;—and, 3rdly. That the National Government and General-in-Chief be charged with the execution of this decree. In consequence, Skrzynecki addressed a letter to Diebitch, informing him that any attempt to execute the imperial ukases would be followed by retaliation upon the 20,000 Russian prisoners now in the hands of the Poles; and, should the war assume a character so abhorrent to their dispositions, the cruelties ensuing would be attributed, both by present and future

generations, to those with whom they first commenced. Diebitch read the letter, sent it back, and proceeded to inflict barbarities more cruel than ever. Yet neither the government nor the general permitted themselves to use their asserted right of retaliation, thus preserving the nation guiltless of innocent blood.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Insurrection of the Russian Countries, or of Volhynia, Podolia, and Ukraina.*

WHEN a country that has formed a part of Poland, borne her name and breathed her social spirit, is deprived of the national appellation, it becomes an unintelligible cipher; the import of which can be found only in the records of ten centuries back, when Slavonia lay as a tablet on which the sword successively traced and obliterated empires, and on which the only enduring characters are those impressed by Christianity. Such an empire was Russia, a part of which now bears the names of Volhynia, Podolia, Ukraina. But, that the present subject may be more fully understood, it is necessary to define distinctly, what were ancient Russia, Muscovy, and the Russian empire of the present day. A few retrospective remarks will elucidate the question.

In the ninth century, whilst the Poles were establishing the centre of their power on the banks of the Vistula, a tribe of the Scandinavian warriors, known in western Europe as Normans, the Varan-

gian Russians\*, led by Rurik, subjugated the Sclavonian countries along the Dnieper (Borysthenes), and founded an empire, of which Kiow was made the capital. The Poles were originally a Sclavonian tribe; the Varangian-Russians were foreign interlopers, and thus two antagonistic elements settled in the bosom of the Sclavonian family: the essential principle of the one, being to diffuse liberty to the extremest limits of the community—that of the other, to absorb every particle of social vitality to the centre of power. Poland protecting the Sclavonian tribes from German subjugation, Russia enslaving them by millions. These distinctive characteristics of the two powers became yet more evident as time rolled on.

The Roman world had split into two parts, and the young nations, which established themselves upon the ruins of the western half, infused fresh life into that portion of the empire. The eastern was but the propped up fragment of a crumbling edifice. The sacred doctrine of Christ was readily received by the healthy west, and imparted fresh vigour to its social communities. The Greek empire was weighed down by heathen sophistry and Oriental despotism, and the seed of Christianity fell there upon the stony ground. The germ of schism,

\* The primitive country of the Varangian Russians would seem to have been some tract on the eastern side of Sweden. The Finns, in their vernacular idiom, still call Sweden a Russian country.—*Routze Moa*.

though concealed, thus already existed in the Christian church. The new doctrine approached the Slavonian nations both through Germany and the Greek empire. Hence it was an important consideration, not only to themselves, but to the rest of the Christian community, whether, in becoming its members, they would range themselves on the side of the eastern or the western church. Mieczislas, king of Poland, embraced Christianity in 965, according to the Latin ritual;—Vladimir, Grand Duke of Kiow, was baptized in 991, according to the Greek. Poland thus became associated to the western powers—Russia turned to the east, and their geographical character was thus stamped for future ages. At that eventful moment, the two kindred nations, as if impelled by antagonistic forces, diverged towards the opposite poles of civilization, and the question arose, at what spot between the Vistula and the Dnieper, the fraternal bond should be severed. The question remains undecided still.

The greatest extent of territory possessed by Russia, was during the reign of Vladimir the Great. The Bug, the Dniester, and the Karpats, constituted her western limits; and towards the east, she extended her power to the sources of the Oka and the Volga.

It is the characteristic of the Slavonian nations to absorb into themselves every foreign element. The vast country bearing the name of Russia, still preserved its aboriginal features. The descendants

of Rurik learned to speak from Slavonian mothers, and the band of Scandinavian invaders soon disappeared among the native millions. In point of language, therefore, Russia still remained Slavonian. The universal adherence of the inhabitants to the Greek ritual alone, distinguished them from those of the other states. Still, as Constantinople acknowledged the supremacy of Rome, religion as yet formed no barrier of separation. Political power was thus the only tie which held together so many millions of Slavonian origin. This power was foreign, founded upon the ruins of their national liberties, and its despotic character was aggravated by being united with the oriental despotism of the Greek empire.

In 1015 Vladimir, on his death bed, divided his conquests among his twelve sons, enjoining them to regard the Grand Duke of Kiow as their chief. Their mutual quarrels, however, soon rendered them vassals to Boleslas the Great, king of Poland; but during the long contest in which the latter was subsequently involved with the German emperors, Jaroslas the Great, having slain his brothers, once more united the provinces of Russia, and dying in 1054, in his turn divided them between his five sons. This partition proved more durable, and 300 years after the arrival of Rurik, the very name of Russia was forgotten, and three new states arose out of her ruins. In the north, the principal commercial towns formed there a confederative republic. Their power

and riches were so great, that Novogrod and Pskow were admitted as members of the Anseatic league, (1169). Eastward beyond the Dnieper, the descendants of Rurik, having shaken off their allegiance to the Grand Duke of Kiow, had established an absolute rule over various tribes. Vladimir on the Klasma, was the capital of their duchy. They rendered their rebellious separation still more complete by throwing off the supremacy of Rome, (1164), which Kiow continued to acknowledge. After that epoch, southern Russia had her own distinct history. Lacerated for more than a century by the domestic quarrels of her dukes, she was by turns the vassal of Poland and of Hungary, until, in 1239, Daniel, a descendant of Jaroslas, united some portions of the distracted land, and formed the kingdom of Halic (Galic or Galicia). Towards the end of his reign, two heathen nations, the Tatars and the Lithuanians, accomplished the final separation of Halic from the eastern or northern parts of the ancient Russia. The former, bursting from the borders of the Caspian, deluged the Slavonian countries with their numbers, while the latter gathered like a storm on the shores of the Baltic sea. Repulsed from Poland, the Tatars subjugated the Dukes of Vladimir (1224), who subsequently, with the permission of their conquerors, transferred their capital to Moscow (1295), and assumed the title of Grand Dukes of Muscovy. Henceforth the existence of Muscovy was entirely isolated from



the rest of Europe, until her dukes, trained in the school of the Tatars, once more emerged, to show the world the tenets they had there imbibed.

The heathen tribes settled on the banks of the Niemen and the shores of the Baltic, pressed on one side by the Teutonic Knights (1230), and on the other by the Knights of the Sword (1204), abandoned their country, and sought refuge in Lithuania and Samogitia. There they established the capital of Paganism, there its power was concentrated in its full energy, and forcing a passage through the outworks of Christendom, it pursued its conquering course along the banks of the Dnieper. The current of this magnificent river seems to impart irresistible force, and no sooner does a warrior start from its source, than he pastures his charger on the plains of Kiow, and bathes his hoof in the waters of the Black Sea. Following in the steps of the Scandinavians, the Lithuanians now arose, and, under their Duke Gedimin, took Kiow in 1336, and afterwards extended their conquests far and wide on both banks of the Dnieper, down to the Black Sea ; the Niemen, the Bug, and the Dniester, separating them from Poland, and the Baltic forming their northern boundary. Eastward, they had no determined limits ; and the Lithuanians three times advanced as far as Moscow. Meantime, Poland recovered the tract beyond the Dniester, the San, and the Karpats, torn from her by Vladimir the Great, and now again united to her (1340).

This terminated the existence of the kingdom of Halic, and no part of ancient Russia now preserved its independence.

The Christian world remained divided. Western Europe breathed an ardent spirit of self-devotion and liberty. The East continued to wither like a branch separated from the parent tree. The Western Latin community, successfully combated the infidels both in Europe and Asia. The Greek schismatics lay prostrate beneath the sword of the Crusaders, the Tatars, the Lithuanians, and the Poles. Of the great Slavonian family, Poland alone had preserved her independence, and by her liberal institutions, and higher degree of civilization, asserted her kindred with the west of Europe. Of the three powers—the Polish, the Lithuanian, and the Muscovite-Tatar—which now shared the empire of the Slavonian countries, the genius of Poland alone had a civilizing tendency, and consequently all her advances eastward, were so many triumphs of European civilization over eastern barbarism. As it was evident that the Lithuanian Dukes and their subject millions must ere long embrace Christianity, both Europe and Slavonia watched with anxiety to see for which of its rituals they would declare. The question, providentially for western civilization, was decided by the marriage of Duke Jagellon with Hedwige, Queen of Poland (1386), on which occasion, he and his people adopted the creed of Rome, and so great a revolution has seldom been attended

with fewer sacrifices. The spirit of civilization which had so long struggled against opposition on the banks of the Bug and the Dniester, now spread at once beyond the Dnieper and the Dwina, and the two parties destined to represent among the Slavonian nations the two opposite principles that agitated the Christian world, stood forward in their distinctive characters during the subsequent period, and displayed in still more striking contrast their social and religious discrepancies. The Polish laws and institutions were at once introduced into Lithuania, but improvements on parchment avail but little, where the popular mind has not been in some degree educated to receive them, and it required two centuries to bring her to an equality with Poland. The difficulty was still greater in Volhynia, Podolia, and Ukraina\*, provinces which had belonged to the Russia of Vladimir the Great, and had originally received the Christian faith from Constantinople. That city had since disclaimed the supremacy of Rome, and these provinces therefore, although nominally incorporated with Poland, restricted their union to political submission, whilst their secret partialities must necessarily have tended towards the state to which they owed their religious conversion.

The Greek emperors, menaced by the Turks, felt the necessity of alliance with Rome. The re-union

\* Volhynia has its name from the city of Volhyn.—Podolia means a level, or low country; and Ukraina, the extreme province.

of the churches took place in consequence at Florence in 1439, although a portion only of the Greeks, and even these but for a short time, adhered to the compact. Muscovy rejected it altogether, but Isidor, metropolitan of Kiow, accepted it. This spiritual covenant promised to prepare Volhynia, Podolia, and Ukraina, for a more complete assimilation with Poland; but important events interrupted then and since her social influence over those countries. Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1553. Pope Julius II. in vain conjured the Christian potentates to advance, under Sigismond king of Poland, against these powerful enemies of their faith, and the Poles were left to maintain the combat alone. The situation of Ukraina, Podolia, and Volhynia, at this period, deserves a peculiar attention. They had long been the theatre of incessant warfare. Once studded thick with cities, and inhabited by a numerous population, they were now reduced to a wilderness by the Mahometan tribes, which swept like a storm over the inheritance of Jagellon. His son Ladislaus, the champion of Christianity, had perished at Varna (in 1444). Amidst tombs, which rising like mountains, marked the bloody passage of the multitudinous nations whose names, as Chateaubriand says, are known only to God;—amidst walls raised by unknown hands, and cemeteries whitening with the bones of Varangian Russians, of the Polovtzy, Mogols, Hungarians, Lithuanians, and Poles, the Tatar still

discerned the several tracks along which he carried desolation from his maritime steppes to the flourishing abodes of the Poles. One of these tracks led from Oczakoff through Podolia; another followed the right bank of the Dnieper, and passed through the plains of Ukraina to Volhynia. A third proceeded from Valachia into Galicia, and all met at Lemberg. Flights of rapacious birds arriving from the South, announced the approaching scourge, and the true omen was quickly confirmed by the glowing sky that reddened in the glare of burning villages. The barbarian hordes in their sudden attacks, overpowered the inhabitants, and seized the fruits of their toil, before the warlike proprietors of the adjacent castles could descend to their defence. Prompt in aggression, prompter still in flight, they dragged into infamous captivity, the youth of both sexes; driving off the herds, and leaving behind them only heaps of ashes, and the corpses of the aged. Notwithstanding this immense havoc, the population still renewed itself upon that beautiful soil, "cut up," as says a Slavonian poet, "by the  
" tramp of horses, fertilized by human blood, and  
" white with bones, where sorrow grew abundantly"—and that population, like the soil, never ceased to be Slavonian.

About sixty miles below Kiow, the Dnieper forms a variety of isles, upwards of seventy in number. The banks of the river, here fringed with woods, there steep and marshy—the deep caverns in the

rocky islands, concealed by spreading trees, or tangled thorn bushes, offered a favourable place of refuge, whilst the open country lay exposed to the barbarians. At the epoch of the first general invasion of the Tatars, and again during the Lithuanian war, many persons found shelter there; and their number was subsequently increased, by the arrival of adventurers, guided by necessity or pleasure, by deserters from the Lithuanian, Polish, Hungarian, and Valachian ranks, by fugitives from Tatar bondage, or by the poor escaping from the oppression of the rich; sometimes also by criminals flying from merited punishment. The motley community was at first held together by a rule enforcing celibacy, fishing, and hard labour. Gradually, they ventured upon secret excursions to the neighbouring countries, which, by degrees, they extended into daring expeditions down the Dnieper, and along the Black Sea as far as the very walls of Constantinople. In more peaceable times, they condescended to inhabit the plains, there to cultivate the soil, and enjoy domestic comfort in the bosom of their families. Such was the origin of the nation since known by the name of Cossacks. The usual characteristic of the Sclavonian race prevailed amongst them, and their language is the same as that of the Ukrainians and Podolians. Their religion remained Russo-Greek, for the union of Florence could not easily penetrate to their hidden abode. Such a rallying of the lowest classes had the inevitable effect of widening still

more the social interval between them and the nobility. Villages and towns rose again and again, under the protection of the adjacent castles, which, whether ancient or new, still served as the bulwarks of the country, and the resort for the young or less wealthy nobles in their warlike exercises. Within their walls, side by side, with the descendants of Rurik and of Lithuanian dukes, Polish lords lived in brotherly concord. They served the same sovereign, fought the same foe, and glowed with equal ardour for the honour and independence of their common country. Heroes of the blood of Czartoryski, Ostrogski, Wisniowiecki, Yazlowiecki, and of many another princely house, achieved, on this soil, the deeds which adorn the Polish and Lithuanian annals, and large portions of it became their inheritance. Thousands of national militia were ever ready to rally round their standard, in case of foreign invasion. In peace, they were the king's counsellors, and the nation's representatives and judges. They were, besides, the channels by which, first the nobility, and subsequently the burgesses and lower orders, received those treasures of liberty, literature, and civilization, of which Poland might justly boast under the Jagellons. Through their moral influence, exercised unremittingly during two centuries, the inhabitants of Lithuania, Volhynia, Podolia, and Ukraina, not only learned to think like Poles, but to speak the Polish idiom. The various parts of the Polish empire having respectively



attained a sufficient degree of moral development, Sigismond Augustus, the last of the Jagellons, thought it time to extend the same privileges to all, and, in consequence, the Diet held in Lublin (1569) declared that Poland and Lithuania should, for the future, constitute one and the same republic, and elect in concert their common sovereign.

The moral sense, the unvarying idea imparted by Heaven to the human race, is the only key which interprets the innumerable ciphers, the many formulas, and the various relations which constitute the history of a free community like Poland. The history of despotic states is, on the contrary, strongly marked in clear and prominent characters. The throne is the pivot round which absolute power revolves, rending, in its relentless course, nations, families, and the hearts of men. Within that circle one alone is free; the rest are numbered things—slaves, whose destiny is varied only by the greater or less degree of physical good, of trade, taxes, &c. Hence it has been thought by many that in writing the history of Muscovy, it is sufficient to give the record of her conquests and statistics. To understand the rest, however, requires a more profound investigation of the past.

The religious differences between Kiow and Moscow, ended in open schism in 1458, when the respective Metropolitans of those cities declared themselves independent of each other. The Metropolitan of Moscow acknowledged for a time the supremacy

of the Patriarch of Constantinople, then in possession of the infidels. He of Kiow attached himself to Rome. The schism became yet wider in 1590, when the Patriarch Jeremias, who had been expelled from Constantinople, sold to the Grand Duke of Muscovy the patriarchal dignity, and ordained an independent patriarch. The spiritual independence took place simultaneously with the temporal. Muscovy shook off the yoke of the Tatars in 1480. Her dukes inherited the despotism of their late masters, and, with a double weight of authority, oppressed their subjects. A twofold career lay open to them—either, like the Tatars, to subjugate other countries by the sword, or, as schismatics, to separate nations from the European community. At the epoch of the conclusion of the middle ages, fortune smiled on Muscovy, and gave her a monarch destined to build up out of these remnants of barbarism which Europe was labouring to shake off, the colossal basis of the throne of Catherine and of Nicholas. Ivan Vasilewitch was a Varangian by blood, a true Tatar in heart, a perfect schismatic in soul. His subjects had the courage to call him “severe;” Europe gave him the ill-assorted title of “cruel.” He alone of all monarchs could say: *Muscovy, c’est moi*. He formed her after his very image and likeness, and clothed her savage nakedness with regal decorations. At the beginning of his reign, Muscovy contained no more than 288,000 square miles of territory, with a population of six millions. Assisted by the Tatars,

Ivan extended her possessions by the conquest of Novogrod, in 1479 ; and his name began then to be echoed in Europe, mingled with the groans of the Anseatic league. Fortune again hastened to cover with the purple the bloody cradle of his power. Sophia, a niece of the last Greek emperor, Paleologus, consented to marry him, and in her right he called himself legitimate heir to the imperial dignity, and hung a double-headed eagle on the walls of Moscow. Then looking around him, he at length remembered that a Russia once existed, and proclaimed himself *Czar of all Russia*. The idea embodied in those words, embracing past and future ages, declared interminable war against Poland. Could that name be applied to Muscovy? She contained barely a rebellious fragment of the conquests of Rurik. Her main possession consisted now in the spoils of the Knights of the Sword, and those of the Anseatic League ; of some Tatar steppes, and of countries bordering on Asia, and inhabited by tribes of a different race from the Sclavonians. The Muscovite language, a mixture of Scandinavian, Tatar, German, and Sclavonian words, is not understood by a Russian\*. In point of nationality, therefore, Muscovy had nothing by which to prove her relationship with the former Russia. The Russo-Greek creed formed the sole tie that united her with

\* A proof of this may be inferred from the circumstance that the Empress Catherine, in 1794, ordered that the Lithuanian statute, written in Russian, should be translated into Muscovite.

many Slavonians. Should, therefore, Ukraina or any other province break its spiritual union with Rome, a sympathy would immediately arise between such province and Muscovy, the strong hold of schism.

During the reign of Ivan the Cruel, Luther had convulsed Western Europe by his denunciation of Papal abuses, and the conflicting elements that had hitherto brooded in silence among the Slavonian nations, now started into life. Protestants flying from German and Bohemian persecution, took shelter in Poland, and availed themselves of her free press to assail the Church of Rome at every vulnerable point. They raised a cry against the union of Florence, which, joined with that of numerous Muscovite emissaries, finally produced its dissolution, in 1520. Deep as was this moral wound to Poland, her political unity was still unscathed. The Muscovites had yielded to her arms, and, thus released from the oppression of their Tatar-bred princes, offered to transfer their obedience to Sigismond III. But Poland, not actuated by the grasping spirit of absolute monarchism, rejected the offer, unwilling to associate herself with a people with whom she had no sympathies, national or religious, and leaving them to find another Czar, devoted all her energies to the renewal of the union of Florence; an object which was finally effected late in the sixteenth century. Still there were many recusants; and hence

arose the two sects distinguished as the unionists and disunionists of the Greek Church.

Whilst other European governments were gradually degenerating into absolute monarchies, Poland, although too firmly established in social and political liberty to make so retrograde a step, was nevertheless checked in her career of reform by theological disputes, and remained vacillating between progress and stagnation. Another source of disquietude was the rising discontent of the Cossacks ; those adventurers constituting but one class of the nation ; no longer satisfied with the rights of freemen, which they had hitherto enjoyed, demanded to share in all the prerogatives of the Polish nobility, even in that of electing the sovereign. To grant these prerogatives to a people so numerous, was deemed hazardous ; and the more so, as they were suspected of leaning towards the Muscovites, whose religion they professed. The Poles having rejected the Muscovite crown, expressly because they would not connect themselves with a nation differing so essentially from themselves, could not consent to admit the representatives of those very Muscovites amongst their senators. The Cossacks did not conceal their dissatisfaction at the refusal, and they burst into open rebellion, massacred the unionists, and pillaged their property. Muscovy, considering them as so many armed supporters of the disunionist party, encouraged their revolt ; and backed by her, they, sword in

hand, reiterated their demand. Poland remained inflexible; and, as her only answer, unsheathed the sword. The thirty years' war, which had desolated Germany, was succeeded by one of a century in Poland, carried on by Muscovy, under the banner of the Russo-Greek religion. At length one portion of the Cossacks, under the promise (never fulfilled) of the same liberties they had hitherto enjoyed, submitted to the dominion of Muscovy; a second to that of Turkey, and the third and largest remained faithful to Poland.

At the commencement of the eighteenth century, religious dissensions had of themselves ceased in Poland. The priests of the disunited church again joined that of Rome, and in 1710 not a single schismatic bishop remained: but though the union of Florence was generally received in all the cities, its progress was less rapid among the villages. It was once more solemnly declared in Zamosc (1720), and civil privileges cemented religious concord. Sobieski was the last European monarch who drew his sword in defence of Christianity. The eighteenth century beheld the completion of the work of evil commenced amid the din of arms two centuries before. Diplomacy, standing armies, commercial advantages, were the considerations which now influenced every national question; and Muscovy, with her Asiatic Tatar spirit, naturally took the lead in this atheistical disposition of human affairs. At this very time

she underwent a new metamorphosis. In proportion as the Christian spirit of Europe cooled, Muscovy encroached with giant steps upon her, each period being marked by the appearance of some individual destined to add a new feature to the colossal form. Ivan the Cruel was the contemporary of Luther; and now, when the last glow of Christian fervour faded on the banks of the Dnieper, some evil genius of the North showed to Peter the Great the kingdoms of the world, and whispered "the hour is come." By intuition rather than by study, Peter comprehended "the signs of the times," broke off his correspondence with the French academy, and commenced a reform consistent with the peculiar character of his mind. He first usurped the patriarchal dignity, pronouncing himself the mediator between his subjects and their God. He next compelled his subjects, by the terror of the knout, to adopt the European style of dress, *improvised* a capital, a new form of government, an academy, a fleet, an army, and finally a cabinet, which, by secret springs, set in motion the infernal machine, framed with a view to perpetual aggression. The inheritance of Ivan, thus metamorphosed, might perhaps no longer bear the name of Muscovy. While Frederick the Great pored over ancient chronicles, doubtful whether to call his kingdom Prussia or Vandalia, Peter the Great, more politic than erudite, looking, with prophetic eagerness, only to the future, set the past at defiance, and



announcing that the word Czar had the same signification as emperor, commanded his empire and his subjects to be henceforth called Russia and Russians. Prussia, Holland, and England, congratulated Peter upon his ingenious invention, and at a later period, France followed their example. Poland alone understood the significance of the word, and so long as her voice was free, called Muscovy by her real name; but the Czarism insinuating itself, like the serpent into Europe, gradually enclosed Poland in its strangling grasp, and shared the victim's spoils with the two sceptered robbers who had assisted in the guilty deed.

By the partition of Poland, Muscovy and Austria became possessed of the territory once called Russia. Austria gave to her portion, the forgotten name of Galicia; and Muscovy thought that she had now acquired a sufficient pretext for her newly assumed name. In the disquietude arising from the consciousness of robbery, Russia endeavoured, by the aid of hireling writers, national as well as foreign, to impose on the European public, by asserting that the dynasty of Romanoff was identical with that of Rurik, and that the Russia of the Scandinavian warriors was the same as the Muscovy of Ivan the Cruel. The monarchs of Europe, whether Protestant or Catholic, judging nations according to an atheistic code, did not refer to the testimony of ages. The Russian cabinet dictating treaties as

well as history, alone knew the nature of its power and the origin of its subjects\*.

The Czarine Catherine, a monster in female form, and head of the Russo-Greek creed, in contemplating the newly acquired Polish provinces, still feared to meet with something that should resist all her efforts to destroy their nationality. She beheld the nobles there as elsewhere, Poles in blood and heart. They might be robbed of their property, and liberty ; but only by effecting their moral corruption, could she hope to extinguish it amongst them. She therefore deferred the execution of her design against the nobles, and taking a lower aim, directed her attention to the cities. Tradesmen of every description were found enjoying the same privileges and liberties as the nobility, speaking the same language, and breathing the same spirit. Descending still lower, Catherine perceived with vexation, that in the villages also, a Slavonian language prevailed, differing but little from that spoken by the higher classes ; and the spirit of the peasantry, if less intense, was still essentially Polish. She sighed (if indeed she could sigh), and began once more to review her newly

\* The history of Russia, which lately appeared in Dr. Lardner's Cyclopædia, is rather an eastern tale, than an historical work. The distinction between Muscovy, and what was once called Russia, is still preserved ; the Muscovites calling themselves *Rossianie* (Rossians), and their country *Rossia*, while the inhabitants of Russia call themselves *Rusini* (Russians), and their country—*Rus*.

acquired subjects. On Sundays, she saw the nobles and tradesmen in her Russo-Polish provinces go to the Catholic churches. In Lithuania there were no other than Catholic churches thronged by the peasants, and not a single Russo-Greek Basilic. Southwards she found a few, and in Podolia and Ukraina, she discovered that a large portion of the peasantry frequented the chapels of the disunited Greek creed, and at once discerned where to strike the first blow against the union effected by Jagellon's marriage. Then commenced the moral attack which has ever since been undeviatingly carried on for forty years. In 1794, Catherine issued an ukase, declaring the union to have been effected by compulsion, and prescribing the rules by which unionists should be converted to the rival creed. All resistance against this violation of the liberty of conscience, was pronounced tantamount to high treason. A propaganda commenced by the agency of civil and military force, and the cruelties then committed, can only be compared with those exercised during the persecutions of the primitive Christians. The churches of the new creed, however, remained, in many districts, as empty as the prohibited temples; the peasantry preferring to go to distant towns to offer up their prayers according to the mode of their fathers: but in many parts of Ukraina and Podolia she effected her purposes. Nicholas always excepted, Catherine was the most merciless of Poland's oppressors, and this artful measure proved fatal to

the southern states, and severed the great tie between the peasantry and nobles.

Less philosophical than his mother, Paul, who looked upon his dominions and their inhabitants merely as so much property, issued in 1796 an ukase, dividing all Russia into goubernies (governments), in which were afterwards included the Russo-Polish provinces constituting the goubernies of Kiow (Ukraina), Podolia, and Volhynia.

The emperor Alexander adopted a different policy from that of his grandmother. The Polish provinces could not be reduced to a similarity with Russia, without first receiving that peculiar Muscovite organization, by which despotism is extended from the throne to the lowest class, and which may be called the back-bone of the Russian automaton framed after the likeness of a civilized society. Above all, it was deemed necessary to give the nobles despotic power over the peasants, in order more effectually to rivet the despotism of the autocrat over themselves; in other words, to attach the nobles to an immoral government by an immoral tie. Such is the life-blood of the giant power, and all its laws, regulations, and ukases, however discordant with each other, still agree in this principle of evil. The administration of the provinces was accordingly changed. Under the Polish government, taxes were levied upon the soil, which effectually excluded slavery. Russia, in accordance with her Tatar principle, counted the souls of men, and made

the register of the population the basis of her system of taxation. The distinction between free peasants and vassals of the nobility, was thus abolished, and the memory of it survived only in the double taxes, thenceforth extorted from the once independent peasants. Landlords were made answerable for the payment of these taxes, and thus rendered accomplices of the Czar's oppression.

Military service, formerly a career of glorious emulation, now devolved entirely on the peasants, attended by all the horrors of Muscovite conscription. The word "conscript," epitomizes the misery of the Russo-Polish peasant, loaded with chains like a criminal, and driven by blows to the camp. If no other affliction weighed him down, this alone would make him regret the Poland of other days as a lost paradise. The proprietors of the soil were also rendered responsible for the quota of conscripts required by the ukases.

Nicholas, a true descendant of Catherine, claimed Ukraina as having been dismembered from the inheritance of Rurik. With genuine Muscovite tyranny, he was labouring to establish a similar right to the Podolian and Volhynian provinces, when the Poles once more denied his pretensions, and in the struggle of 1831, amid torrents of blood, asserted their ancient limits. That blood is not yet cold, nor that struggle ended. It began on the banks of the Dnieper, ten centuries back;—

there it again raged in full force seven years ago ;— it pines now in silence, and in dungeons.

“ The intelligence of the insurrection in Warsaw,” says a Volhynian writer\*, “ was received by us with  
 “ the joy that a child might feel at the sight of its  
 “ mother awakening from a death-like trance. We  
 “ sought our friends and neighbours, our counte-  
 “ nances expressing the ardent patriotism of our  
 “ souls. The young, beaming with the hope of  
 “ recovering our native land, our liberties, and rights.  
 “ The aged renewed in strength, and the women  
 “ lamenting the weakness of their sex. We spoke  
 “ but little ;—the silent joy of our Polish hearts  
 “ showing itself in the warmer pressure of each  
 “ other’s hands.” That intelligence arrived accidentally about the 20th of December, and spread rapidly through the other two provinces. Had a single Polish detachment then been sent amongst them, it would soon have swelled into a formidable army. But so energetic a measure was never contemplated by the Dictator, who would not even consent that the provinces should be invited to co-operate, whilst they waited for his signal in anxious expectation. While Chlopicki thus condemned the patriots to inaction, no measure of precaution was omitted by the Russian government. On the day (December 13th) when Constantine entered

\* Memoirs of Colonel Charles Rozycki.

Volhynia, the emperor signed an ukase, which placed the sister countries under martial law. He accompanied a second, assuring the nobles of his confidence in their loyalty, by a private injunction that they should give public testimony of it, and addresses were consequently forwarded to St. Petersburg, and paraded in the journals, dictated by a power which, not satisfied with corporeal oppression, tortured the secret feelings of the soul, to ascertain how much dignity, loftiness, and patriotism still harboured there. Ukraina, Podolia, and Volhynia, contain 53,328 square miles, with a population of about four millions and a half. Of these, 300,000 are nobles—500,000 Jews, or Greek and Armenian adventurers, ever ready to side with the strongest party, and the remainder peasants, nearly all professing the Russo-Greek creed. The insurrection would, therefore, have been at first confined to the nobility, who, on that account, were now more closely watched than ever, not only by the civil and military authorities, but by the priests (popes), who were enjoined to employ the moments of confession in persuading the peasants to act as spies and informers, and even to use violence against their Catholic lords. Blasphemous proclamations against the insurgents were officially read from the pulpits, and sermons were preached, announcing that the end of the world would follow upon their success. Yet, before Muscovy can effectually establish her iron rule, she must destroy every generous sentiment of the human



heart. Perhaps it is only in an icy atmosphere, and amongst a peculiarly constituted nation, that a system such as hers can prosper. The people, although weighed down by centuries of misfortune, are still as rich in noble feelings as their fair fields are in their fertility. Sighing over the present, aged peasants remember better days—the days of Polish rule. Fettered by inhuman oppression, they look for relief only to the nobles—the men of Polish birth. After the partition, the preservation of the country's hopes devolved exclusively on them, and they acquitted themselves as true Poles only in proportion as they truly practised Christian virtues. When called upon to render an account of their high trust, it has often happened, that many a Russo-Greek priest, or government officer, has been found to sympathize in deeds as well as words with Poland, and not a single peasant has been known to betray his lord. In speaking of their country, their usual expression, accompanied by sighs, was, “God grant us better times—the times of old. May God prosper those who are well disposed towards us.”

Disappointed of all aid from Warsaw, moral and material, the patriots at length resolved to rise without. Enthusiasm, gave way to prudence, and secret associations were formed, in order to make the necessary preparations with security in the presence of a vigilant enemy. Their emissary Nyko returned in March with Prince Czartoryski's answer:—“That

“ the government leaves it to the consciences of the  
“ citizens to decide upon the propriety of rising.”  
A secret meeting was therefore held, and the insurrection in Podolia and Ukraina resolved on, befall what might the national arms within the kingdom. Each of the twenty-four districts was to furnish 500 horsemen fully equipped, and the 5th of May was fixed for the rising. It was decided to give unconditional liberty to the peasants, and to make them proprietors of the soil they cultivated, but not to put arms into their hands until the Russian authorities should be driven away, or some position gained, lest the priests or government agents should tempt them to acts of violence. It was also proposed to send to Warsaw all articles of plate for the support of the common cause, and to levy a separate contribution amongst themselves for that of their own insurrection. The Volhynians were not able to form associations on a scale equal to that of the two other provinces, owing to the presence of a larger Russian force; but many rich individuals continued to make ready privately for the first favourable opportunity. Such was the state of affairs when Dwernicki arrived.

On reaching Zamosc, he had dispatched towards Uscilug a reconnoitring party, which surprised a Russian detachment, and took 500 prisoners. He then himself advanced towards Volhynia; and, on the 10th of April crossed the Bug, with his small, but tried band, of 1346 infantry, 2523 cavalry, and

the artillery men attached to 12 cannon, amounting, in all, to 4088. Returning thanks to Heaven for allowing him once more to unsheathe his sword in those countries, Dwernicki followed the steps of the enemy along the frontiers of Galicia. On the first day's march he destroyed 100 Cossacks; the next he cut to pieces at Poryck a regiment of Russian cavalry, and from thence addressed a proclamation to the Volhynians, which terminated thus:—"I bring  
" you your nationality and your liberty. Rise now  
" or never!" But these stirring words reached no farther than the enemy's columns, and were lost there. The Russian General Rudiger retreated with 13,000 troops, unwilling to face Dwernicki without being first reinforced. On the 16th, the latter halted at Druzkopol, where he instituted a provincial government, and was joined by 100 insurgents. On the 19th, he arrived at Boremel, where Rudiger having discovered his numerical inferiority, no longer declined an engagement. The river Styr lay between them, and the Russians lost a day in unsuccessful attempts to take the bridge, and the Poles 300 men in defending it. In the night Dwernicki was informed that the Russians were crossing the river higher up. "So much the better," was his reply—"to-morrow we shall beat them, and cross in our  
" turn." On the 19th, about noon, Rudiger commenced his attack by a heavy cannonade, and Dwernicki leaving his infantry to guard the bridge, and a part of his cavalry to watch another important point,

with the remainder threw himself upon the enemy. The combat, as was ever the case when he commanded, was soon over. His lancers first silenced the artillery, and by two brilliant charges routed the Russian cavalry, killing 800 men (amongst whom was a general officer) and taking 400 prisoners, besides eight cannon—their own loss being 400 killed and wounded. This victory was one of the few recorded in military annals gained over an enemy four times as numerous as the conquerors. On the 20th, Dwernicki passed the Styr, and just at the moment of his leaving Boremel, Count Stecki, with 120 insurgents, took possession of the town of Vladimir, and expelled the Russian authorities, to the great satisfaction of the inhabitants. But their joy was of short duration. General Davidoff dispatched by Kreutz with a reinforcement to Rudiger, intercepted Dwernicki's communication with Zamosc; and, being in close pursuit of him, surprised the little band at Vladimir. After a short skirmish, the cavalry saved themselves by flight, and joined Dwernicki's corps; but the infantry, after a stout resistance in a barricaded house, were compelled to surrender. The Cossacks set fire to the house, with the intention of destroying the Countess Stecka, who had been employed during the action in tearing up cushions and chair covers to make cartridges for the soldiers. Her life was saved by two Russian officers.

On leaving Boremel, Dwernicki endeavoured, by hasty marches to reach Podolia, to support the

intended rising ; but Rudiger (whose force was now more than doubled) resolved to prevent him, and also to cut him off from Galicia, which protected his flank, by occupying a strong position near Lulince, a village close to the frontiers of that province, and but a few miles from that of Podolia. Dwernicki, however, outmarched him, and arriving there on the 23rd of April, two hours before him, made ready for battle. This Rudiger still declined, notwithstanding his great superiority in numbers, and after two days of ineffectual manœuvres to entice Dwernicki from his position, sent a detachment over the Austrian frontiers, surprised two Austrian sentinels, and attacked the Poles in the rear. Dwernicki had now no other resource than to enter the Austrian territory, driving the Russians before him ; and they fought until an Austrian colonel interfered ; but the Russians still continued to pursue the Poles, and killed fifteen of their men after they had ceased to fire. By an order from Vienna, the Poles were disarmed, and sent into the interior of Austria, whilst the prisoners and cannon they had taken, were restored to the Russians, who were permitted to leave the territory unmolested. By the connivance of the Galicians, however, nearly all the Poles, about 3000, made their escape, and returned to Poland, all but their gallant chief, who was too closely imprisoned. After this calamity the people used to say, “ with Dwernicki fortune has “ forsaken us ;” and indeed the loss of his corps,

known only by its victories, was fatal to the remainder of the campaign. Dwernicki has since said, that, with one more regiment of experienced infantry Poland would now have been independent. Yet history will reproach him for having left Zamosc before either Chrzanowski or Sierawski could bring him support. On quitting Boremel, he should have returned to Zamosc, when he perceived the impossibility of successfully contending against the overwhelming force of the enemy. The error also he committed in keeping close to the Austrian frontier was so striking, that, when it was known at Skrzynecki's head-quarters, Chrzanowski pronounced at once that he was lost. Or had he even marched from Boremel into the middle of the country, he would have found thousands of willing hearts and hands, and his incomparable cavalry would have increased to 30,000 men, mounted on chargers, swift as the winds of the Ukraina steppes.

“The fate of Dwernicki,” says the beforesaid Volhynian writer, “acted upon us as does the ice upon our rivers. To outward appearance, we became motionless and frozen, but the current of patriotism and hope flowed unchecked beneath.” Their bright anticipations had been chilled, but, determined to assert to the last that the rights of Poland ceased not to be imprescriptible even *de facto* in any of her provinces, they resolved that the rising should take place. In this also they were unfortunate; and their plan was disconcerted by

Dwernicki's agent, who, after appointing the 27th of April for the commencement of the insurrection, countermanded his order on the very day. Great numbers were of course compromised. Of these some escaped to Galicia, and some were sent to Siberia. Some few fled to the woods, where they organized insurgent bands, aided by women who risked their lives to supply them with arms, ammunition, and food. These were, however, soon dispersed by the Russians.

Much in the same way was the outbreak paralyzed in Podolia and Ukraina; but the patriots in those provinces having greater facilities for acting in concert, were able to bring together at Granow on the 13th of May, a body of 2500 men, consisting of 17 squadrons of cavalry, and two foot companies, with one piece of cannon. Yelowicki's squadron stood foremost, where the aged chief and his three sons served in the same rank with their followers. Next came that of Alexander Sobanski, whom his countrymen likened to another Achilles. There also were the squadrons of Potocki, in whose race the bleeding sires bequeathed their patriotism to their children; of Wacław Rzewuski, called the Emir by the Turks, on account of the exceeding beauty of his chargers, and his unequalled skill as their rider,—a poet, moreover, a musician, and a perfect master of arms. The supreme command was entrusted to General Kolyszko, a companion of Kosciuszko, eighty years of age. The next con-



sideration was, what to do? The old general presided like a patriarch, giving no directions, but listening to the suggestions of all. Unskilled in tactics, but confident in their valour, the patriots thought only of preparing the peasants to take arms. They therefore immediately adjourned to Granow, an estate belonging to Prince A. Czartoryski, where his benevolent administration had been rewarded with the filial affection of his vassals. A summons being issued, the Russo-Greek priests assembled in the church, with numbers of the aged peasants, and were thus addressed by Alexander Yelowiecki: "Behold your sons," he said, pointing to a squadron composed solely of peasants, "Ask them whether they took arms willingly?"—(here a shout bore loud witness to their enthusiasm). "They are now free, and from henceforth on an equality with their masters. We offer you the same freedom; deliverance from Russian oppression, from servitude, and from conscription. The soil you cultivate shall be your own. Your sons, if they will receive instruction, shall become magistrates or officers. You will be governed by the same laws with ourselves; you will become Poles. Your fathers thought themselves happy in living under Polish government. Your condition will now be infinitely better. Your landlords have long desired to make you happy, but have been prevented by the Czar, which title means not God, but Devil (Czort). You

“ are witness that many of your landlords have  
“ been sent to Siberia for merely wishing to make  
“ you free. At length God has shewn his mercy  
“ upon them and you. The Poles have driven  
“ away the Czar who called himself their king,  
“ and they have now a king of their own nation.  
“ You know that your own prince is now king of  
“ Poland\*, and you know also that the Czar has sent  
“ all his troops against the Poles. You have seen  
“ them pass, but you will not see them return, for  
“ half have already perished and the rest shall also fall.  
“ The blessing of God is on a righteous cause. He  
“ has commanded to fight for freedom, and who  
“ fights not for freedom, never shall be free. You  
“ are well aware that we have power to oppress  
“ you, we have been made rich by your toil, and  
“ might remain so, but we have left our palaces,  
“ and renounced our riches, to liberate you from  
“ bondage, to restore you to those rights of freemen  
“ which God gave and the Czar has taken away.  
“ We are willing, we are prepared to die for our  
“ native land, but alone and unassisted, we cannot  
“ uphold the freedom which we bring you. You  
“ also must fight, if you would transmit to your  
“ children freedom, wealth, and happiness. Follow  
“ therefore the example of your sons. Join with  
“ us, and we will lead you to victory, and then

\* A report had spread amongst the peasants that Prince Czartoryski was become king of Poland.

“ return to render thanks to God for allowing us  
“ to drive away the Czort (the Devil).” During  
this true portraiture of their wretched condition,  
the peasants could not refrain from tears, and  
solemnly promised that their sons should fight.  
The priests did not weep ; but on being assured  
that their religion would be respected, and parti-  
cularly when they were told that their ecclesiastical  
profits would be increased, they did not spare holy  
water, nor their blessings on the insurgents. The  
same day some hundred young villagers of Granow,  
joined the army, and there was no longer any doubt  
of the peasantry. The first victory was to be the  
signal for their rising. That victory was not  
granted to the patriots. The following day they  
marched towards Daszow, hoping to surprise a  
detachment of Russians stationed in Biala Cerkiew.  
But so entirely had they neglected every military  
precaution, that they did not even conjecture that  
General Rott was close behind them, until having  
taken position about four miles beyond Daszow,  
a sudden firing proclaimed his approach. One  
squadron repulsed him twice, but on the death of  
its chief, retired in confusion. Major Orlikowski  
with two more then advanced, and General Rott  
stopping short ordered a cannonade, which not  
proving at first very destructive, the Poles called  
upon their chief to lead them on. Orlikowski,  
however, who perceived that Kolyszko was pre-  
paring for a general charge, would not run this

risk, and ordered them to retire. Unused to military phrase, they did not understand the command until it was reiterated a third time in ordinary language; and some few voices from the ranks, then exclaiming, "we are lost, let us escape," the panic spread, and they all fled with ungovernable speed. The rush of the fugitives disordered the first squadron of Kolyszko's column, which fell back on the second, and thus successively all the seventeen were thrown into utter confusion. The venerable general tore his grey locks in despair, and other chiefs endeavoured, but without success, to rally their men. "Shall it be said that Polish nobles fled before the enemy" thought the few, (about fifty in number,) who vainly opposed the fatal flight, and drawing themselves up at the entrance of Daszow, they awaited unmoved the advancing foe. They were a noble band. Their names are amongst the most illustrious in the heraldic annals of Poland. Possessed of many thousand miles of territory, lords over many thousand subjects, a single tomb may now contain these willing martyrs for the freedom and welfare of all. "Forward," they shouted, and fell like the thunder-bolt upon the hostile columns. Each was opposed to many, each dealt his deadly blows. They took the enemy's cannon, and killed hundreds of Russians. They were entirely surrounded, but, Decius like, they hewed a passage with their swords, and effected their retreat. Awed

by such valour, the Russians retired four miles from Daszow, yet General Rott afterwards reported that he had vanquished many thousands, and that, notwithstanding the desperate resistance, he had lost only 200 men. The insurgents lost only their single piece of cannon and six men killed. But their moral defeat was complete. Of the seventeen squadrons 400 only remained ; the rest dispersed in the woods, and many were afterwards taken and sent to Siberia.

On the 17th of May, the remaining handfull of insurgents fell in at Tyvrow with two Russian squadrons. General Kolyszko would have avoided a battle, but Edward Yelowiecki, upon the plea that a victory would raise the courage of the soldiers, obtained permission to pass the river Boh, and charge with 200 men. The squadrons were completely destroyed, and the few who escaped the sword, perished in the river. This success, however, rendered no material service to the insurgents, who remained surrounded on all sides. In the moment of perplexity, they intercepted a dispatch from the Russian general Szczucki, by which they learned that he was advancing, with three squadrons and two cannon, to cut off their retreat. The letter was no sooner read, than the sound of artillery gave notice of his attack ; but so sudden and vehement was their onset, that, before he could fire a second time, they had taken his guns, and put his cavalry to flight. This occurred at Obodne, the 19th

of May, and on that day many were the Russian veterans who laid down their arms at sight of lances, waving the flags embroidered in secret by Polish ladies, and yet warm with their sighs and tears. Of the three squadrons only three men escaped, the general himself being amongst the prisoners. Major Orlikowski was deeply affected by these successes, and bitterly reproached himself with having ruined the cause by his retrograde movement at Daszow. The insurgents finding their prisoners an incumbrance, released them next day, accompanying their clemency in this instance, as in many others, with liberal gifts of money, and eloquent discourses on liberty. It would seem that Poland so long martyred, and still a stranger to any vindictive feeling, was not yet destined to recover her independence by the shedding of blood. Christian magnanimity has remained like a flower twined in her wreath of thorns. May its seed not fall upon the rock, but bring forth fruit in its appointed season!

Kolyszko marched his victorious band to the district of Latyczew, not far from Kamieniec Podolski, to join another party of insurgents; but still incautious, although in a country swarming with foes, his rear-guard was surprised at Maydanek on the 23rd of May, by 2000 Russians. After a long struggle the Poles were overpowered by numbers, and many perished. The aged Yelowiecki and his son were found lying side by side amongst the

slain, and Orlikowski beholding the defeat, and ever reproaching himself as the cause of every misfortune, threw down the sword with which he had defended the cannon to the last, and shot himself in presence of the victorious army. Kolyszko, with the wreck of his men, was compelled to take refuge (26th of May) in the Austrian territory.

In the north of Volhynia, near its capital, Zytomir, Major Charles Rozycki, since the fall of Napoleon, had lived in retirement upon his own estates. His high character had secured the esteem and confidence of his countrymen, who, on the outbreak of the insurrection in Warsaw, looked to him as their future chief. Owing to the luckless counter-order of Dwernicki's agent, instead of the 800 rifles and 500 horse, who would have assembled at his call, he could collect only 120 of the last, and with them he left his home, a wife and five children, regardless of the cruel ukases which condemned such orphans to Siberia. Still further, to inspire his men with confidence in him, he bound himself by the following oath :—" The moment is come  
" when divine mercy shines forth. The tyrant's  
" forces vanish beneath the sword of our brethren.  
" I, Charles Rozycki, elected your leader, swear  
" before the Almighty to use my powers only for  
" the good of the fatherland. No human force, no  
" fear of persecution, shall intimidate me, nor all  
" the treasures of the enemy, nor any personal  
" views, bribe me to change. So help me God, and



“ the martyrdom of Christ.” His men having, on their part, sworn unlimited obedience, he gave them some instruction in tactics, and suggested that on going into battle they should be drawn up in a single rank, and reply to the savage hurrah of the enemy, “ Glory to God !” He then marched at once into Podolia to join Kolyszko, and on the 20th of May destroyed at Cudnow a party of 150 foot and horse, escorting 560 conscripts, whom he sent back to their homes. On the news of the unfortunate defeat, and subsequent withdrawal of Kolyszko into Galicia, he bravely resolved to retrace his steps through Volhynia, in order to join the national standard in the kingdom, and his men consented to follow him in this career of a thousand perils. During this retrograde movement his band augmented, in a few days, to two squadrons. By great speed, and sudden changes in the line of march, he avoided falling in with any overwhelming force. A battalion of the Russian regiment, named after the Duke of Wellington, barred his passage at Moloczki, in Volhynia, and fell, where it stood, to rise no more. Only three soldiers remained unhurt, and these accepted service with the patriots ; twenty wounded were sent, provided with money, to the next village, but had not strength to reach it. The remaining 600 had perished. Raising their holy war-cry, “ Glory to God !” Rozycki and his men pursued their course day and night. At Ulcho he intercepted a convoy of cannon, and sunk them in

the river Slucz ; at Ostrog he took 200 ammunition waggons, the contents of which he also sunk, and gave the waggons to the peasants. On arriving (May 31) at Miedzyrzec, where was a college, under the superintendence of the Piarists (priests), he found it impossible to withstand the earnest desire of the elder students to form a squadron, and join him. To the younger pupils (between fourteen and fifteen) he positively refused his permission. Unknown to him, however, the lads contrived to conceal themselves in the baggage waggons, and the next day many of them were barbarously murdered in an affair with the Russians, just as he was leaving the town ; fifty of the Russians were killed, and as many taken prisoners. The rest fled, but having for a moment possession of the waggons, they destroyed these children, and were only prevented, by a hot pursuit, from slaughtering every one of them. Two of the elder students were found in the town, one already dead, and the other mortally wounded—three Russian soldiers laying slain beside them. The commandant of the two discomfited squadrons having reported that he had encountered several thousand insurgents, the Russians withdrew their forces from the Bug, in order to cover their exposed points, and Rozycki then crossed the river. But he had yet many difficulties to surmount before arriving at Zamosc. At Uchanie he was obliged to fight his way through one regiment of dragoons and another of Cossacks, and

made 150 of them prisoners, besides taking 300 horses and as many swords. He reached Zamosc on the 10th of June, after a march of 530 miles in twenty-eight days. His three squadrons were afterwards embodied as a regiment of Volhynian cavalry, himself being appointed colonel. It was considered one of the best in the army, and was much admired for its peculiar adoption of a single rank. Rozycki was a true champion of those countries; and so long as they can furnish men like him, the descendants of Ivan the Cruel will not extend their rule to the shores of the Bug.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *Expedition against the Guards.*

ON receiving the melancholy intelligence (May 9th), of the fate of Dwernicki's corps, Skrzynecki resolved to carry into immediate effect a plan long since suggested by Chrzanowski, against the imperial guards—and which, both in a political and military light, was well worthy attention. From the absolute immobility of this magnificent body of men, 20,000 in number, commanded by the Grand Duke Michael, it would seem that it was originally merely intended to grace by its presence the triumphal re-entry of the Russians into Warsaw. At least it was evident that the emperor wished to spare a corps, the destruction of which, officered as it was, by the sons of the most illustrious Russian families, would have carried dismay into the very heart of the empire. Such, indeed, was the anxiety to preserve them from the slightest risk, that General Sacken, with 8000 men, was detached by Diebitch, to carry on the insignificant skirmishes against a Polish band, in which they must otherwise have engaged.

Stationed in the palatinate of Plock, they formed the enemy's extreme right wing, and any Polish attack upon them would be eminently favoured by the rivers Bug and Narew, and the fortress of Modlin. Another powerful inducement was the demand of the Lithuanians, who had now been long in arms, for troops, and especially for able officers. Their request had been urged in vain by Prince Czartoryski, but the misfortune of Dwernicki at length decided the general-in-chief to send a reinforcement, in the hope that it might encourage the Lithuanians to form a new corps in the rear of the enemy. Skrzynecki commenced his operations skilfully. He despatched General Chlapowski with the 1st lancers, accompanied by 100 officers and 100 mounted infantry, to make their way into Lithuania, between the Russian army and the guards, taking good care, though with much affectation of secrecy, to make their departure public. Diebitch accordingly sent notice of it to the Grand Duke, in order to secure to him the honour of capturing the little band. The various detachments of the guards which had been stationed at intervals between Lomza and Vysokie-Mazowieckie, were, in consequence, collected, and a division of cavalry, with one of infantry, marched upon Vonsew, while the Grand Duke, having the Narew on his rear, continued at Zambrowo with the remainder of the troops, believing himself secure of his prey; whilst, in fact, the very position he had chosen exposed him to

complete defeat. Quitting the environs of Kaluszyn on the 12th, Skrzynecki, to cover his manœuvre, left there 12,000 men, under General Uminski, with orders, in case of attack, to resist the enemy as long as possible, but if needs must, to fall back on the walls of Praga, and there renew the contest, assisted by the garrison (6000 men), and the national guard of Warsaw. Diebitch, although aware that only a detachment had departed for Lithuania, advanced on the 13th, with his whole force, towards Kaluszyn, to reconnoitre the Polish army. Upon this the advanced-guard of the Poles immediately abandoned the town, and joined Uminski, who was advantageously posted, with the main body, at Yendrzeyow. The enemy proceeded straight forward, and attacked them. The Poles stood firm for eight hours, and then retired, without any pursuit, Diebitch imagining from their resistance, Skrzynecki to be on the ground; and little suspecting that he was, on the contrary, advanced two days' march in an opposite direction, returned to his camp at Siedlce.

This success enabled Skrzynecki to pursue his plan without molestation. He received the intelligence of it on the 15th at Serock, where he made the following distribution of his forces. General Dembinski, with 4000 men, marched along the right bank of the Narew, with orders to dislodge Sacken's corps from the bridge opposite Ostrolenka; and in the event of the guards endeavouring to retreat in that direction, to cut off their passage, by destroying

it. Twelve thousand men, under General Lubieski, on the right bank of the Bug, were directed to observe Diebitch's movements, and to throw a bridge across the river for Uminski's corps, which was to follow Diebitch, step by step, and then join Skrzynecki, who, with the remainder of the forces, consisting of three infantry divisions and two of cavalry, was to advance in three separate columns. Towards the evening of the 16th a vanguard of the guards was met at Przetycza; but being too weak for resistance, it retired, in haste, with the loss of some prisoners. The next day all the detachment of the guards assembled at Sokolow, and the Poles took a station in face of them, but night prevented further operations.

The Grand Duke Michael was, no doubt, surprised to find himself so far repulsed by a little corps which he had considered as his certain prize; but he was undeceived as to the small number of his adversaries by a Polish officer, who was taken prisoner on the night of the 18th, and revealed that Skrzynecki himself was present with his force. The intelligence, however, came too late to be of any use. He was enclosed with his corps on an elbow formed by the Narew between Ostrolenka and Lomza; and although there was a bridge at the latter place, yet, owing to its being surrounded by marshes, and only accessible by a dike a mile long, the retreat in that direction could not be effected without the greatest peril. There was also another



road open to them, leading from Sniadow to Tykocin, but in passing that way there was great reason to apprehend that the Poles, who lay encamped within the distance of a cannon-shot, would be able to drive them into the marshes of the Narew, which extend along it. Thus even nature joined to favour the enterprise, but fortune in war smiles only on the bold.

The morning of the 18th dawned on the Polish army, awaiting with general impatience the signal for attack. The day passed in disappointed expectation—that day which they trusted had been destined to carry consternation to Nicholas on his blood-stained throne. Skrzynecki remained passive in the presence of the enemy, after having marched 150 miles with the sole object of engaging them. He had conceived the unseasonable apprehension that Sacken, stationed at Ostrolenka, about ten miles off, would attack him in the rear; and having, in consequence, deprived himself of 10,000 men, whom he sent, under General Gielgud, to assist Dembinski to dislodge that corps, he could no longer hope that his remaining force, thus diminished by a third of its infantry, would be victorious over the guards whose resistance would be rendered still more resolute by despair. This was the consequence of not having listened to Chrzanowski, who had objected to the troops under Lubinski being sent away; and proposed, by falling on the Russians with an overpowering force, to crush, on the same day, both

the guards and Sacken's corps. Gielgud found Dembinski in Ostrolenka, Sacken having withdrawn in alarm at his approach to occupy Lomza, from whence he could reinforce the guards with 8000 men. Skrzynecki was thus compelled to wait another day until the return of Gielgud, which delay gave time for the guards to execute their retreat in perfect order.

Early in the morning of the 20th the Polish army broke up, and towards the close of the day overtook a rear-guard of the enemy in the great forest of Rudki. Skrzynecki immediately attacked them, but owing to the night, and the thickness of the forest, could only capture one battalion. The same day Gielgud entered Lomza, which Sacken had quitted in great haste, leaving behind him 2000 soldiers sick or wounded, and a quantity of baggage and ammunition. He then advanced along the chaussée on the right of the Narew, hoping to intercept the guards at Tykocin, but a portion of them crossed the river there early on the 21st, and the rest at Zoltki; but not having time to destroy the bridge, they were closely pursued by the Poles, who, however, could not get possession of a long dyke, all the bridges over which had been broken up, and which was defended by several battalions and a powerful artillery. During the night the Russians evacuated Tykocin, and so ended the expedition against the guards.

On the 22nd of May Skrzynecki assembled his

troops at Tykocin, around the statue of Stephen Czarnecki, one of the heroes of Poland, to offer up their thanks to Heaven. It was a brilliant moment. Two bulletins, announcing his arrival on the Lithuanian frontier, inspired the hope of ultimate success. Europe, which had but two months before daily expected to see Poland laid prostrate by a single blow, now scarcely knew whether most to admire the Poles, or to detest their oppressor. Many were the instances in which "Poland and Skrzynecki" were all but apotheosised; and he, her hero, ranked amongst the greatest captains of all ages. The metaphysical Germans outdid all other nations in their enthusiastic praise of his genius. "Mighty nature," so said one journalist, "works and creates in stillness and in night. In stillness and in night Skrzynecki meditates his plans, and the curious Aurora beholds them grow and ripen." Caricatures of Diebitch and his Imperial master were everywhere exhibited, and the eulogists of Russia found themselves obliged to be silent. The enthusiastic of all nations now believed that Skrzynecki was about to drive back the barbarian power, that, like the frost of Siberia, chills the breath of liberty in Europe. But such great works are accomplished only by men of as daring and mounting genius as Czarnecki, at the foot of whose statue he had knelt. By his indecision Skrzynecki had lost a second opportunity, and it was doubtful whether the Russians would commit fresh blunders, and fortune offer him

another. Whatever may now be the event, the Poles, at least, have done enough to merit the admiration of posterity.

Though the expedition had failed in its principal object, it was still thought that important advantages would result from the arrival, in Lithuania, of the detachment under General Chlapowski, who, having passed between the guards and Diebitch's army, reached that province on the 21st. Prince Czartoryski, bitterly disappointed by the result of the expedition against the guards, hastened to Skrzynecki's head-quarters, carrying with him an address, drawn up by himself, from the National Government to the Lithuanians. As an historical document, embodying, in a masterly manner, the mind of its author; ever striving, like a watchful father, to guide his countrymen in the noble path of their ancestors, it deserves to be recorded at length.

“ BRETHREN AND FELLOW CITIZENS !

“ The National Government of regenerated  
“ Poland, rejoicing in at length being able to address  
“ you in the name of liberty and of the bond of  
“ brotherhood, hastens to describe to you the actual  
“ state of our country, and to lay before you its  
“ necessities, its dangers, and its hopes.

“ The wall that separated us is broken down.  
“ Our wishes and yours are realised ; the Polish  
“ eagle hovers over your land. United, heart and  
“ hand, we shall henceforth labour together to

“ accomplish the difficult and dangerous, but great  
“ and holy work of our country’s restoration.

“ The manifesto of the Diet, in explaining the  
“ motives which determined us to rise, expressed  
“ your sentiments as well as ours. Our insurrec-  
“ tion was scarcely organised, our resources were  
“ yet feeble, and our plans still immature, when we  
“ proved to the world and to the Emperor Nicholas,  
“ that we were animated by the same spirit, and  
“ desirous to constitute, as formerly, one and the  
“ same nation. The emperor Nicholas would not  
“ hallow his brother’s tomb by a monument which,  
“ during the life of Alexander, would have sealed  
“ the glory of his reign. He would not view us  
“ as injured Poles, as citizens of a free and inde-  
“ pendent country. No ; he chose to treat us as  
“ rebel slaves of Russia.

“ We have arrested, we have repulsed his threat-  
“ ening phalanxes. Some of the various corps  
“ which compose our army, are here resisting his  
“ main force ; others are penetrating your provinces,  
“ to summon their brethren to the national standard.  
“ You did not wait for the summons. From the  
“ very commencement of the insurrection, many of  
“ you declared their sentiments and their wishes in  
“ the national assembly, and organised legions  
“ distinguished by the names of your provinces ;  
“ finally, whole districts of Lithuania and Volhynia  
“ rose *en masse*.

“ The partition of Poland was pronounced a  
“ crime by the unanimous voice of Europe. Who  
“ at this day will revoke the decision? Who will  
“ declare himself the champion of that deed? No  
“ one, assuredly; and we have even the well-  
“ grounded-hope that Europe will hasten to recog-  
“ nise our existence as soon as we shall have proved  
“ ourselves worthy of being an independent nation.  
“ We will prove it by our courage, our union, and  
“ our noble and moderate conduct.

“ Our insurrection is a consequence of our mis-  
“ fortunes, and the oppression we have endured:  
“ it was the wish of our hearts, and arises from the  
“ nature of our history. Vigorous from its very  
“ origin, it is of no foreign growth; it is no civil  
“ war; it is not stained by brethren’s blood: we  
“ have overturned no social institutions to be re-  
“ placed by others, as blind chance might direct.  
“ Our resolution is a war for independence, the most  
“ just of wars. It is daring and gentle, as the na-  
“ tional character; with one arm overthrowing the  
“ enemy; with the other raising and ennobling the  
“ native cultivator of the soil.

“ We admire England and France; we would be  
“ a civilized nation like them, but without ceasing  
“ to be Poles. Nations cannot, and ought not to,  
“ change by violence the elements of their existence.  
“ Each has its climate, its industry, religion, morals,  
“ character, degree of cultivation, and history. From



“ these various elements arise the passions, the revolutions, the specific conditions of their future destiny. Strongly marked individuality constitutes a nation’s strength; we have preserved ours in the midst of slavery. Love of our country, always ready to make every sacrifice, courage, piety, magnanimity, gentleness, were the virtues of our forefathers; they are ours also. The insurgent inhabitants of Warsaw were triumphant on the 29th of November, without a leader and without restraint. With what crime can they be charged? The capital, the 30,000 men of our army, the whole kingdom, rose as by enchantment. How did they conduct themselves towards the Grand Duke Constantine? That prince, who, during his merciless rule of fifteen years, had shown no regard for our feelings and our liberties, was now in our power. But he knew the nation, and just to us for once, and once only, he trusted his own person and his troops to our honour. No Sicilian vesper-bell resounded to the cry of national vengeance, and we respected him and his soldiers without availing ourselves of our advantages. Our battalions, whilst awaiting, unmoved, the united forces of Russia, opened their ranks to grant a passage to the fallen enemy, whose safety was guaranteed by Polish faith. Numerous instances attest the generosity of the nation. Europe admired our moderation no less than our valour. Brethren and fellow-citizens! equal



“ admiration awaits you. Come forward, then,  
“ simultaneously, and act in your united strength.  
“ In peace as in war, the people are the source of  
“ power ; to the people, therefore, direct your views  
“ and your affections. Sons, worthy of your fore-  
“ fathers, you, like them, will break your hated  
“ bonds, and cement a holy alliance by benefits  
“ conferred on the one side, and by gratitude on the  
“ other. In other countries it is by force that  
“ the people win back their liberties ; with us they  
“ receive them as a gift from their brethren. A  
“ generous, just, and necessary measure will be the  
“ act of your own free will. You will yourselves  
“ proclaim deliverance to the people, and it is thus  
“ that you will celebrate the return of the Polish  
“ eagles to their native soil. Your fields will not  
“ be less fertile nor less peaceful for being cul-  
“ tivated by the hands of the free. You will have  
“ ennobled yourselves in the eyes of civilised  
“ Europe, and the country will have gained mil-  
“ lions of citizens, who, like our brave peasants,  
“ will fly to the defence of liberty, to throw  
“ off dominion characterised by servitude.” The  
address, after enlarging on the respect paid by  
the Poles in former times, to religious rites  
and feelings, and calling upon the people to follow  
that example, proceeds to describe the im-  
mense power of Russia, and the difficulties to  
be encountered in a conflict with her ; and con-  
cludes thus : —

“ All the nations of Europe, all who are sensible  
“ to the voice of humanity, who are moved at witnessing unmerited suffering, tremble for our fate ;  
“ they thrill at every report of our success ; perhaps  
“ they only wait for our general rising, to receive  
“ us as members of their family, to hail us independent. Lithuanian brethren ! Now is the  
“ moment. Unite all your resources, all your  
“ forces ; and when together we shall have finished  
“ this terrible and unequal struggle, we will invite  
“ the potentates of Europe to form a tribunal. We  
“ will appear before them covered with our blood ;  
“ we will open in their presence the book of our  
“ annals, unroll the chart of Europe, and say,—  
“ ‘ Behold our cause and yours ! The injustice  
“ ‘ committed against Poland is known to you ; you  
“ ‘ see our despair. For our courage and our  
“ ‘ magnanimity, consult our enemies ! ’ Brethren !  
“ Let us hope in God ! He will send his spirit into  
“ the hearts of our judges, and, guided by his  
“ eternal justice, they will pronounce, ‘ Long live  
“ ‘ Poland, free and independent ! ’ ”

In the meantime, Diebitch, dispirited by continual reverses, had dispatched a letter to St. Petersburg, which was intercepted by the Poles, and the import of which was as follows :—“ J’ai perdu la confiance  
“ de l’armée, j’ai perdu la mienne ; je prie votre  
“ Majesté de me sauver, c’est-à-dire, de donner le  
“ commandement de l’armée à un autre.” He was roused from his painful meditations by the intelli-

gence of the peril to which the so highly-prized guards had been exposed during the five days of his inaction. Sacrificing all other considerations to the desire of saving them, he immediately left Siedlce, and marched day and night to their rescue. In one day he advanced forty miles. On the 22nd, when the guards were already out of danger, he passed the Bug at Granna, above Nur, where General Lubieniski had taken 150 of them prisoners, and had remained since the 17th. Pursuant to his instructions, Lubieniski then withdrew to Czyzew, where he joined the main army on its retreat from Tykocin; but having neglected to give notice of this to his vanguard, one brigade of infantry and a cavalry regiment, with ten guns, were intercepted at Strzalkow by six regiments of Russian cavalry and eighteen guns. The night was far advanced, when they were summoned by the Russians to lay down their arms, as all resistance would be useless. Replying, that the way was ever open to Polish bayonets, they forced a passage through their enemies, of whom they destroyed a considerable number, losing themselves only fifty men.

On the 24th, all the Polish forces, except Gielgud's corps (which had not retired beyond Lomza), concentrated at Nadbory. Diebitch halted during the 23rd and 24th at Vysokie-Mazowieckie, for the guards to join him. Had the latter been previously destroyed, Skrzynecki might at once have attacked him; but under the actual circum-

stances, it would have been dangerous to oppose their junction. During the 25th, the Poles advanced toward Ostrolenka, and in the night, all their corps except Lubienski's, crossed to the right bank of the Narew. Gielgud still continued at Lomza. Ostrolenka, on the left bank of the Narew, presents advantages for defence, which may have suggested to Skrzynecki the idea of leaving a detachment on that side of the river, although the fact that only a single bridge existed to afford the means of retreat ought to have decided him against it. Another motive, however, prevailed. After his late unprofitable march of 250 miles, he was anxious to do something that might gratify public expectation, and felt encouraged by the successful actions at Minsk and Yendrzeyow, to venture another partial engagement. Lubienski's corps, therefore, was exposed alone to the ensuing day's struggle, whilst the rest of the troops passed the bridge to take some repose; and so sanguine was he as to the result of this arrangement, that he allowed the greater part of the artillery ammunition to be sent back towards Pultusk.

On the other hand, Diebitch having assembled 70,000 troops and a formidable artillery, pushed rapidly forward, and early on the 26th of May, perceiving a part of the Polish army which he had lost all hope of overtaking, stationed within two miles in advance of Ostrolenka, immediately prepared to attack them, advancing numerous

columns of infantry and cavalry on their front, left and right, in order to cut them off from the town. Thus pressed, nothing remained for the Poles but a prompt retreat, and this was executed better than could have been anticipated. The 4th of the line (and no fitter regiment could have been chosen) covered the movement, and repulsed with its usual gallantry the charges of the lancers of the guards. The Russians, however, outflanked the Poles, and had taken possession of the bridge before the 4th of the line could reach it. Any other regiment would probably have perished; but with bayonets fixed, they forced their way through the burning streets, and with terrible speed rushed to the bridge. Then commenced the fiercest conflict of the day, the Polish soldiers fighting with only their bayonets for half an hour, until they had passed the river, but could not destroy the bridge for want of the necessary preparations. A fire was then opened by two Polish guns on the Russian artillery posted behind the bridge, but the gunners were soon stretched dead by rifle shot from the houses of Ostrolenka. A Russian battalion advanced to take the two pieces, but they were immediately recovered by the Poles. Fresh Russian reinforcements were again opposed by the Poles, till, without any previous plan, the battle became general on the right bank of the river. At that moment Skrzynecki appeared. The presence of the enemy on the right bank of the river so disturbed

him, that he determined, at any expense of Polish blood, to prevent what seemed to him so pregnant with danger. Diebitch, on his part, was equally resolved on keeping the position, for which purpose he had already sent over twenty-four battalions.

A combat which lasted ten hours then commenced, the Poles exhausting their strength in vain to drive the Russians back over the river, whilst these were not more successful in their endeavours to advance beyond the bridge. The field of battle extended partly over a space of some hundred square yards, and partly on the chaussée along the marshy banks of the Narew. The enemy had the advantage in position. The elevated chaussée, behind which their infantry was placed, served as a strong rampart against that of the Poles, and, covered by the extensive marshes, it was able to defy all the efforts of their cavalry. From the hills of Ostrolenka the Russians opened a battery of thirty-two pieces on the left of the town, and another of thirty-six on the right, which, by a cross fire, effectually protected their infantry. In the teeth of such overwhelming difficulties, the Poles had to conquer the bridge, or, at all events, to maintain possession of the chaussée, the only way by which they could retreat, as the impassable marshes commenced within half a mile of the bridge.

Skrzynecki ordered three consecutive infantry attacks to be made upon it, all of which were



successful, and had they but been provided with the means of destroying it, the Russian battalions on the right must either have laid down their arms, or perished in the river. As it was, the Poles were obliged to retire ; and each time they retreated, the Russian artillery poured, with blind fury, a destructive fire both on them and their own troops. Diebitch continued sending reinforcements to his broken and wavering battalions, thirty-six of which had already traversed the bridge. Skrzynecki led his men to fresh attacks, but was so severely assailed by the artillery, that he could not penetrate beyond the bridge, and retired with very great loss. Only twenty Polish pieces were allowed to keep a measured fire, in order to spare the ammunition, which was, notwithstanding, all expended by three o'clock. A light horse battery of twelve pieces, under Colonel Bem, was reserved for a moment of extreme peril. The Russian fire was therefore exclusively directed against the Polish infantry, the last division of which was now brought into action. All the battalions repeatedly made for the bridge, at the point of the bayonet, but could never gain a decisive advantage. Notwithstanding the unfavourableness of the ground, General Kicki was thrice ordered to charge with cavalry, but his heroic efforts could not avail against the local difficulties. A fourth charge was led by Skrzynecki in person, who then became convinced that it was not possible to employ the cavalry with advantage. About six o'clock, the Polish battalions



being all broken, Skrzynecki abandoned the hope of driving the Russians beyond the bridge, and directed his efforts to prevent their passage. From that moment, he effectually served his country. Intrepid, undaunted as on the plains of Grochow, he moved through the field like a standard, round which all rallied. The Russians now passing from the defensive to the offensive, were in their turn unable to advance beyond the bridge. The battle assumed a more remarkable character, the Polish artillery having for many hours ceased to fire. Towards evening, fresh columns of the enemy appeared. This was their last effort. Colonel Bem, with his horse battery, regardless of the enemy's tremendous cannonade, advanced at full speed, and charged the Russian infantry within musket-shot distance, while Skrzynecki made such an effective attack with the infantry, that they were repulsed to the river, and did not renew their assaults. The exertions of the Polish soldiers in this last encounter were extraordinary; one of them killed eleven Russians with his scythe, for which exploit Skrzynecki invested him on the spot with his own cross.

The field of battle presented a spectacle such as has seldom been recorded in the annals of war. Twenty thousand bodies of the slain, together with slaughtered horses, broken swords, muskets, lances, and scythes, so loaded the ground, to the extent of half an English square mile, that no space could have been found for a single foot-step. Amidst heaps

of the dead, were several women, with their infants, struck down by the Russian cannon, as they were flying from the flames of Ostrolenka. Many Russian soldiers were seen struggling in their last agony to force out the Polish bayonets which had been thrust, and left, in their intestines. The philosopher may smile or weep, according to his temper, as he views this mass of human victims ; but the historian will discern amongst them 5000 Poles, who fell in the defence of their country's honour and independence, and of all that constitutes the worth of man's existence. The glorious death of 300 Polish officers sheds lustre on that fatal spot. Generals Kamienski and Kicki also perished there—the latter, the bravest and the handsomest, the very essence of chivalry. Always exposing himself wherever danger was greatest, he was wont to exclaim, after each escape, “ How wonderful, oh my God, that I am still alive.” He was usually called the Polish Alcibiades ; and probably his merit might in part be traced to a source whence many of the virtues of men derive their origin—to the influence of his accomplished and romantic lady, who used to beguile his leisure hours by reciting to him passages from Homer, or singing the historic songs of Niemcewicz. Skrzynecki had two horses killed under him, and several musket balls pierced his uniform. Owing to the officers on this occasion generally preceding their columns, the battle of Ostrolenka has been called the Battle of the Officers. The more than ordinary

courage, with which the Poles fought on that day, has since been a matter of wonder even to themselves ; and indeed men are capable of marvellous achievements when animated by the knowledge that their former laurels and their future hopes are set upon a single stake.

The Russians also exhibited more than ordinary courage in this battle, owing to their artillery, which, being posted in the rear, prevented them from retreating. The river close to the bridge was choked with their corpses, and the loss of 15,000 men was the cause of their inability to pursue the Poles the following day, and of their long subsequent inaction. In the stillness of the night, Skrzynecki summoned his generals to council, and asked whether the field conquered with so great a waste of life should be maintained during the next twenty-four hours. This resolution should have been adopted, both in order to allow Gielgud to come up, and to avoid the unfavourable impression at home and abroad, which a sudden retreat could not fail to produce. It was, however, generally opposed, on the grounds of the impossibility that the exhausted troops could be able to hold out, and of the peril to which Gielgud would be exposed during a flank march to join the main body in the presence of the enemy. Timidity is contagious, and Skrzynecki, not to stand single against all his generals, ordered an immediate retreat. With regard to Gielgud, two squadrons of the Posen cavalry were sent to him under Dembinski, with orders that he should march into Lithuania.

On the 27th the army arrived at Pultusk, without having been pursued. Here Skrzynecki entrusted the command to General Lubienski, and throwing himself into a carriage with Prondzynski the chief of his staff, drove to Warsaw, weeping, and repeating the words of Kosciuszko, "*Finis Poloniae.*" The troops followed unmolested, and on the 29th entered Praga.

Amongst the errors with which Skrzynecki has been charged, one of the gravest was his leaving Gielgud at Lomza. This officer commenced his march towards Lithuania on the 27th, along the chaussée of Kowno. On the 29th he attacked General Sacken, who, with 8000 men and sixteen pieces of artillery, occupied a position at Raygrod, deemed impregnable, being protected on each side by lakes. But the Poles overcame these difficulties. The two squadrons of Posen cavalry, especially, distinguished themselves by breaking through several battalions, and Sacken lost two cannons, 1800 men killed, and 1200 taken prisoners. No further obstacle remained to obstruct Gielgud's march into Lithuania, and he had no longer to apprehend the double fire from the troops of Sacken, and those sent against him by Diebitch. On the 3rd of June he passed the Niemen at Gielgudyszki, and entered the Lithuanian territory.

## CHAPTER X.

### *The Insurrection of Lithuania.*

THE Duchy of Lithuania, three times as extensive as the Polish kingdom established in 1815, contains about 8,000,000 inhabitants, chiefly Roman Catholics. The men, whose virtues shed undying glory on the last days of Poland's political existence, Kosciuszko, Reytan, and Korsak, were of this province ; so also are the poets Niemcewicz and Mickiewicz ; so also, by origin, is the guardian of the country, Prince Czartoryski. The Lithuanians have always been forward for the restoring of Poland ; and, on the present occasion, no one except Chlopicki, who knew but little of his country, or the Czar, who dreaded such an event, could have doubted their co-operation.

The Warsaw insurrection was hailed in Lithuania as joyfully as in any other part of ancient Poland. The majority of the officers of the Lithuanian corps sympathised with it, but Chlopicki's fatal negotiations gave time for precautionary measures, and 600 of them were transported into the interior of the empire, and their places supplied by men of Muscovite origin. Such an alloy would have sufficed

to demoralize any army, and the Poles felt its evil influence, until the corps was finally disabled at *Dembé Wielkie*. Then, however, 4000 of the men entered the national service. The whole population was forced to renew their allegiance to the Czar, who by this measure tacitly admitted the illegality of the former. As in the other provinces, the nobles had to forward to St. Petersburg loyal addresses, and aspirations for the success of the emperor against their rebellious countrymen. But even this act of compliance could not tranquillise his paternal solicitude, and by a confidential ukase, addressed to all persons of distinction who had ever borne arms, he required them to emigrate for an indefinite period to the government of Orenburgh, on the Asiatic frontier. Next came an order, that all weapons of offence should, on pain of death, be delivered up to the Russian authorities. It was rigorously enforced, and the inhabitants were deprived not only of all their fire arms, but of their scythes, forks, long knives, and all iron instruments, though evidently agricultural. Even after this, the Russian troops carried their mistrust so far, that they usually marched with loaded guns and lighted matches. They knew the hatred borne them by the Lithuanians, whom, not even their formidable presence could intimidate into inaction. Three thousand persons, mostly servants and young men, contrived to escape into the kingdom during the month of January, and an ukase was in consequence

issued, wherein masters were declared responsible for their servants, fathers for their children, and public officers for their clerks.

It had been the policy of Russia for forty years to carry on her aggressive wars at the expense of the Polish nation ; and on the present occasion, the Czar employed the resources of the Lithuanians as a means of destroying the Poles. The peasants were compelled to convey both their own and their landlords' provisions to the Russian camp, over a space of between two and three hundred miles, from the Dwina to the Niemen and the Bug, during the depth of winter, and over bad roads, the chaussées being exclusively reserved for the army. Frequently they were ill-used, and obliged to return without their waggons, or perhaps detained for weeks, waiting to deliver their contributions. The houses of the nobles were used as hospitals for the invalid soldiers, and the army advanced like a scourge of heaven, leaving behind it hunger, sickness, and affliction. The battle of Grochow having baffled the Emperor's hope of crushing the insurrection at a blow, he next ordered the Lithuanians to furnish an extra number of conscripts, and provisions which would have sufficed for 300,000 men during a year. This crowning act of despotism, purposely designed to deprive them of all means of resistance, raised their indignation to the highest pitch ; and, in despair, they unfurled the banner of insurrection. On the 25th of March, the rising commenced in the three



districts of the Vilno government, comprehended under the name of Samogitia, and bounded by Prussia, the Baltic, and the Duchy of Courland. Six hundred Russian soldiers, stationed in various garrisons, were disarmed. Two hundred of them, however, escaped into Prussia, from whence, soon permitted to return, they occupied Polangen, a seaport of the Baltic. They were, however, when driven out by the insurgents, who, in their turn, retired on the approach of a Russian force from Courland. In four days the whole of Samogitia was successfully insurrectionized, and placed under Polish authorities. The Russian Colonel Bartholomews, with 1200 men, then sought refuge in Prussia, and the Samogitians believing that, in accordance with the existing neutrality, he would be disarmed and detained till the conclusion of the war, did not pursue. Contrary to their expectation, however, after eighteen days' detention, he returned furnished with food and ammunition to attack them, as Prussia, designating them as brigands, professed to owe them no neutrality. The insurrection had spread through the whole government of Vilno, and various small garrisons had surrendered. Hitherto, about 1200 cavalry stationed in Vilkomir, under General Bezobrazoff, had prevented all attempts of the insurgents in that district. Yet the fears of the Russian general so magnified their number, that he evacuated the place, in order to join the garrison at Vilno. On reaching the river Viessa, his passage

was barred by Labanowski, a nobleman, at the head of eighty rifles. Aware that he was closely pursued by other parties, the general implored Labanowski by their former friendship, to allow him to pass, promising to refrain from hostilities in the country he was about to traverse. Labanowski with more kindness than tact, not only agreed, but even threw a bridge across the river to facilitate his passage. The Russian requited the service by forcibly carrying him to Vilno, where he was subsequently beheaded. This dishonourable conduct, shewed the insurgents the degree of trust due thenceforth to their enemy. They swore to fight to the last, and having overtaken Bezobrazoff before Vilno, captured 100 of his men, with all his baggage and stores.

In one week the whole government, excepting the towns of Vilno and Kowno, was cleared of the Russians. The clergy, who had been elsewhere hostile to the cause, were here to be seen marching at the head of the parties, with the cross in one hand and the sword in the other. The women also took an active part, reproaching the luke-warm, animating their husbands and brothers to the combat, and devoting themselves to the care of the wounded ; even after all hope was lost, they still concealed their wounded countrymen in the wood, and exposing themselves to privation and danger in their service, aided their escape into foreign countries. The name of one who has acquired European fame must not be left unrecorded here.

In a district of the Vilno government, which lay between that of Vitepsk and the Duchy of Courland, and was commanded by the fortress of Duna-burgh, the banner of insurrection had not yet been unfurled. Men shrunk from the perilous task, but it was undertaken and achieved by a young and heroic woman. The Countess Emilia Plater was only twenty-two years of age. In her ardent imagination, to which the study of the Polish poets had given a colouring of deep sadness, the love of country had become passion. Secretly quitting the residence of her aunt, accompanied by six other young ladies, all disguised in male attire, she appeared at mid-day in the village of Dusiaty, and displayed the national flag. The sight roused the inhabitants. Enthusiasm kindled some, shame compelled others to rise; and, in the district where but a day before no one had dared to name the insurrection, all now were in arms. Such an exploit, in the very presence of a numerous Russian garrison, was a striking instance of moral courage. Possessed of every desirable accomplishment, the Countess Plater was weary of existence, because her country was in slavery. The report of her having commanded a regiment, and charged at the head of the cavalry, is false. Although she animated the combatants by her presence, her sword was never stained with blood, and she would have shuddered at the very idea. Under a warrior's garb, she retained a woman's heart, and her existence was so bound up

in that of her country, that she could not survive its fall.

The insurrection was less general in the government of Grodno, owing partly to the absence of many leaders, who had long before escaped into the kingdom, and partly to the large reserves of Russian troops stationed there. It was confined to the forest of Bialowies\*, which served as a stronghold to the adjacent country; and as the chaussée by which it is traversed was one of the two principal lines of communication between Diebitch and the empire, his convoys of ammunition and their escorts were perpetually intercepted by the Poles emerging from its inaccessible retreats. In the government of Minsk, Vileyka and Dzisna were the only districts which rose, the others being restrained by the Russians. Eighteen ensigns, emulating those of Warsaw, escaped at imminent risk from the fortress of Duna-burgh, put themselves at the head of peasants, expelled the Russians from Dzisna, and then, unable to stand against the superior force of the enemy, fought their way into the government of Vilno. There the

\* The Bialowies, forty miles in length and twenty-six in breadth, may be called a primitive forest. In this extensive tract there are but three villages, and some portions of it are said to be as yet unexplored. It is the only spot in Europe where the bison (Zubr) is found, of which it is estimated there are here about eight hundred. In 1802, the Emperor Alexander issued an ukase, prohibiting any of these animals to be destroyed on pain of death.

insurgents, emboldened by success, collected about 6000 horsemen, and, led by Count Zaluski, were on their march to fall upon Vilno, when they received a check which convinced them of the unfitness of their irregular and ill-armed troops to engage in pitched battles. They therefore again divided, in order to carry on a partisan war. Those who endeavour to trace the fall of Poland to local disadvantages, and deficiency of natural defence, show but little discernment in their mode of justifying crime. It was owing to the innumerable small rivers which intersect that province, and the impenetrable woods which cover half its surface, that the handful of insurgents were enabled to resist, during several months, and almost without arms, 30,000 regular troops. The loss of a great battle could not have more effectually perplexed Diebitch than did the Lithuanian war, as, by the occupation of the two great roads of St. Petersburg and Moscow, his operations in the kingdom were suspended and his supplies cut off; and this he admitted in one of his bulletins, assigning it as a justification of his inactivity, and of his withdrawal towards the Bug.

The accounts of the insurrection, all tending to show the precarious state of the Imperial power in Poland, greatly exasperated Nicholas, who, on the 3rd of April, issued the following ukase, unequalled for severity even in Muscovite annals :—

“ 1st. Every nobleman taking part in the revolt,  
“ shall be tried by a court martial, and executed on

“ the spot ; his estates and personal property confiscated, and his children sent as recruits to the military colonies.—2nd. Individuals of lower rank taken under arms, shall be sent to Siberia, and incorporated with the battalions stationed there, and their children sent as recruits to the military colonies.” The ukase, however, came too late to prevent the insurrection, and did but increase the hatred borne to its inhuman author.

About the same time, the National Government ordered the insurgents to make themselves masters of Polangen at any price, as an English vessel was expected at that port with a supply of arms. The Samogitians alone made two assaults ; both were unsuccessful, and the vessel moreover never made her appearance. The merchant, an Englishman of the name of Evans, had accepted a commission for arms, and then sailed for Smyrna, with the very cargo for which he had already received payment.

The students of Vilno, unable to remain inactive within its walls while the flag of freedom waved without, determined to join their countrymen. On a day appointed, 550 of them, accompanied by some of the Professors, left the town ; and, though pursued by the garrison, they repulsed three attacks, and joined the insurgents, in the district of Troki, and subsequently served in the ranks of the national army.

But the fate of Lithuania was soon to be decided. Ten thousand men, detached by Diebitch, and fresh

troops from the interior, under General Pahlen, the Governor of Courland, and others, traversed the country in every direction, exceeding, in their barbarities, even the dictates of the ukase, for proof of which let one instance suffice. The Russian Colonel Verzulín, after a successful contest with the insurgents, entered the town of Oszmiana on the 13th of May, the day of a religious festival and the hour of divine worship. The men capable of bearing arms fled, and the aged, the women, and the children, sought refuge in the church. Neither the sanctity of the place nor the helplessness of the victims disarmed the fury of the barbarians, and 300 innocent beings, together with the priests, were massacred at the foot of the altar by the Cossacks of Caucasus. Children's ear-rings, still hanging in the ears which had been cut off; and women's rings upon the severed fingers, were afterwards openly exposed in the market-place of Vilno.

Pressed on every side, the Lithuanians still desisted not, night or day, from their attacks on the enemy. The destruction, however, of the Samogitian foundry at Vornie, and far worse of their powder mill, effectually crippled their efforts, as, after that loss, even a successful skirmish did but accelerate their ruin by diminishing the stock of ammunition which they vainly endeavoured to supply, at any expense, of gold or life. Still, though abandoned, as it at last seemed, even by Heaven, wandering and



proscribed, with no prospect but death or Siberia, the love of their prostrate country supported them—their hopes still rested on the appearance of the Poles—who, so long expected, at length arrived five months later than the time appointed.

It has already been mentioned, that Chlapowski entered Lithuania on the 21st of May, with 800 men and two pieces of cannon. His progress was marked by successes. At Bronsk he burnt a large train of the enemy's provisions; and at Bialystock, on the 22nd, captured 1000 of their infantry. Pushing forward to attack General Linden, who, with 600 foot, 200 horse, and two guns, was besieging the forest of Bialowies, he took 500 prisoners, both the guns, and 400 muskets. By forced marches, day and night, he next surprised the garrison of Lida, 400 strong, with four guns, one officer only saving himself by flight. At Uzgowice, he dispersed 1000 Cossacks, and thence had projected an assault on Vilno; but on hearing of the intended rising in Minsk, was already on his march thither, when he was surprised by the unwelcome arrival of Gielgud. General Chlapowski has rendered full justice to the enthusiasm with which his troops were received by the Lithuanians. "Not one false brother," so he wrote, "was found amongst them. All classes favoured our march, collected intelligence, and always brought us true reports. That march, of 400 miles amidst the hostile garrisons, proved to me that I was still in the land of my fathers." As the news

spread of his approach, the insurgents left the forests to hail their deliverer. At Kitoviszki, the aged Prince Oginski, accompanied by 2000 insurgents, presented him an address, the following extract from which conveys but a faint idea of the feeling which greeted him :—" To obey your orders, " we will sacrifice life and property, and in return " we ask neither glory nor rank—we desire only to " do the duty of all Poles. If, General, you " should speak of our devotion to the National " Government, and to the General-in-Chief, assure " them that our strength, our means, our faculties, " whatever we may call our own, will be consecrated " to the general good, to the preservation of the " Polish name."

Chlapowski possessed the unbounded admiration of his soldiery, and the same sentiment was soon imbibed by the natives, who regarded him as a superior man. Yet he, whose recent progress had given proof of such great zeal and talent stood paralyzed by the approach of Gielgud, whose incapacity he knew, but whose orders, as the senior officer, he was bound to obey. From that moment he was jealous and disheartened. The National Government, aware of the evil, hastened to remove it by giving him the supreme command, but the commission never reached him. On the other hand, the Lithuanians beholding Gielgud at the head of 10,000 men, and a train of 24 guns, and not in the least suspecting his arrival to be the result of Skrzynecki's mistakes, received

him as their destined deliverer, and converted his march into one continued triumph. At every village the whole population came out to salute the troops. The priests, in their official vestments, blessed their arms—women strewed flowers in their path, and every household received them as long lost and lamented sons and brothers. Such cordiality brought tears even to the bronzed cheeks of the veterans, and Gielgud's vanity was so flattered, that he entirely lost his head. His first blunder was to summon the insurgents from their forestambuscades, and form them into regiments, thus converting excellent sharpshooters into bad regulars, and at the same time enabling the enemy to unite against himself. Again, though his only chance of success lay in rapidity and sudden movements, he wasted much time, after his arrival on the 3rd of June, in total inaction. At length, having detached two battalions of his newly-formed infantry under Colonel Szymanowski against Polangen, where the landing of arms was still expected, he resolved, with the remainder of his force, to make an attempt upon Vilno. The capital of Lithuania might easily have been taken when the Poles first entered the province; but the garrison, at that time not exceeding 5000, was now increased to 30,000. Beyond the moral effect of the triumph, and the temporary disturbance of the Russian communications, of which it formed the centre, few advantages would have attended the conquest, nor had its difficulties been sufficiently considered by

Gielgud. Brave himself, he thought his men could execute, by mere bravery, a now impracticable plan. The town is least accessible on the side of Ponary, so celebrated in Napoleon's campaign of 1812; and Gielgud ordered Chlapowski to make a demonstration on that side, whilst Dembinski was to feign an attack from the North, and both were to await the main body under his own command. On the 18th, Dembinski obeyed the order, but not finding himself supported, effected a retreat under the fire of the enemy with his usual presence of mind. His co-operation for the following day, for which Gielgud had, without any sufficient reason, delayed the general assault, was, however, lost. His troops advanced with ardour, anxious to display their courage to the Lithuanians, who, on their part, were full of emulation. Under an able leader, impossibilities almost might have been achieved; but Gielgud not only opened the assault on the most difficult point, but conducted it with so little combination, that the efforts of his men were entirely vain. After a sanguinary conflict of eight hours, their perilous retreat was covered by the 1st lancers, who, by three vigorous charges, deterred the Russian cavalry from pursuit. Eight hundred Poles were killed, but the general discouragement of the insurgents, on witnessing the defeat of the regular troops, was a still greater evil.

So dissatisfied were Gielgud's officers, that 300 of them waited on Chlapowski, and offered him the

chief command. Without disputing the general's incapacity, Chlapowski expressed his disapprobation of their proceeding, and threatened them with a court-martial, on the ground that even failure would be preferable to insubordination ; and that should the insurrection fall, it ought still to leave an example of unity and concord. This disciplinarian logic, assuming that the welfare of the cause must give way to the rules of the service, was partly prompted by Chlapowski's despair of restoring affairs from the ruin to which Gielgud was rapidly reducing them. It was not long, however, before his efforts were again required. The chief of his staff being found drowned in the river, Gielgud, in deference to the general voice, devolved the post on Chlapowski, and from that time the chief command was also virtually his.

The enemy now re-assumed the offensive, and advanced in three columns, 30,000 strong. The first column attacked a single regiment at Kowno, which was soon dispersed, the Countess Plater, who was present, owing her preservation to Colonel Kiekiernicki, who gave her his own horse, and was in consequence himself taken by the Cossacks. The possession of Kowno was of great importance to the Russians, as it enabled them to prevent the Poles from retiring beyond the Niemen. A second column advanced upon the main body under Gielgud, who retired without making an effort at resistance, but passed on to Szawle, where the other

troops were ordered to join him. Dembinski alone continued to uphold the character of the Polish army. On the 29th of June, he repulsed the third column at Wilkomir, and successfully maintained his position till the 1st of July, when, in obedience to Gielgud, he commenced his retreat, still forcing the enemy to pay dear for every inch of yielded ground, and again repulsing them at Poniewir. On the 7th, all the forces, amounting to 14,000 men and twenty-four cannon, united before Szawle. This town, defended by field fortifications, and 4000 Russians, and containing military stores, had been twice unsuccessfully assaulted by the insurgents, and once actually held for a short time by them. It was now attacked by Gielgud on the 8th of July, but, as usual, to no purpose, notwithstanding his great superiority of force. This being his last exploit in Lithuania, the system of government which he there introduced, should now be adverted to.

Previous to his arrival, no central power existed, but as each district was freed from the Russian authorities, a local government was established, as transferable as the insurgent bands, and all maintaining the strictest unity of purpose. One horseman was levied upon every twenty houses, and one foot soldier on every five, and the government of Vilno alone, thus raised 24,000 foot and 6000 horse. The levies were differently conducted however, in the districts, which rose *en masse*, such as Samogitia, which asserted its independence during the war.

Gielgud had been enjoined by the National Government to abstain from all legislative interference, and to act only as an auxiliary, avoiding a pitched battle until the arrival of a reinforcement. A central power was to be formed of members chosen by the Lithuanians, the first act of which, would have been to ratify the emancipation of the peasantry. Religious toleration was to be strictly observed, and places in the Polish senate promised to the Greek bishops. In order to ensure the co-operation of the Jews, the refusal of the army contracts was to be given to them. Taxes were to be levied only upon the nobles and the towns, the necessary contributions having been all along furnished by the insurgent leaders. The general was instructed to spare no pains in propagating the insurrection through the other governments, by suitable manifestoes, and by the establishment of a periodical journal calculated to convey the requisite intelligence to the Lithuanians isolated in their forest residences. Had these injunctions, dictated by Prince Czartoryski been observed, the issue would have been very different. But Gielgud, once arrived in Lithuania, spurned all counsel or control, and, like all inferior minds, thought only of asserting his own supremacy. Without consulting the Lithuanians, he established a central board of five members, all, either unacquainted with insurrectionary affairs, or without mental capacity, to the exclusion of those individuals who were universally trusted and esteemed. This



futile power, counteracting the effect of the previous judicious measures, did but accelerate the coming downfall.

From Szawle, Gielgud proceeded to Kurzany, where the discontent of the officers finally rose to such a height, that they deprived him of even his nominal command, and separated the troops into three corps, under the respective guidance of Chlapowski (accompanied by Gielgud), Dembinski, and Roland. The next day, Chlapowski proceeded towards Memel, Roland's corps forming the rear guard. On the 11th, the Russians overtook him at Povedynie, and a sharp action ensued, during which Chlapowski, although but little in advance, instead of rendering any assistance, continued his march, and having passed the Prussian frontier, laid down his arms on the 12th, at the village of Schlungsten. Roland followed in the same direction, but refusing to enter Prussia, approached Jansbork, intending to cross the Niemen there. The sight of his soldiers, resolved to fight their way into Poland, recalled those of Chlapowski to their duty, and resuming their arms, they joined their countrymen. Nothing could now exceed the exasperation of the commanders. Suspicions of treachery were murmured by some, and at length a lieutenant, attached to Roland's corps, suddenly quitting his regiment, galloped up to Gielgud, and shot him in the midst of a group of officers. He died asserting his innocence. Having reached Jansbork,

and finding himself completely hemmed in, and his progress homewards cut off, Roland also entered Prussia on the 15th. This lamentable conclusion was owing to a mistake in their line of march; and Dembinski, by marching in a contrary direction, has acquired undying fame. His celebrated retreat will be mentioned hereafter. Upwards of 6000 Poles laid down their arms in Prussia, not being permitted, like the Russians, to re-cross the frontier. On the contrary, Prussia provided their enemies with the means of destroying them, and then undertook the task of giving them burial. Finding themselves handed over to their foes, few, or none of the Lithuanians, sought refuge there. They escaped to their forests, where they partially protracted the war till the close of November, from whence, if human calculations be not wholly vain, they will emerge in pristine energy and with better fortune.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE retreat of the Polish army from Ostrolenka to Praga, was equivalent to a defeat. Previous to the expedition against the guards, the emperor Francis had conceived so favourable an opinion of the national prospects, that he had proffered his support, and even proposed to restore Galicia, on condition that the Polish crown should be bestowed on the Archduke Charles. But the unfortunate affair of Ostrolenka changed the views of Austria, who, considering the cause as now hopeless, at once broke off the negotiation. It is worthy of remark, that Austria had twice before, in 1809 and 1815, offered to restore her share of the spoils of Poland. A time may come when she may find it advisable, for her own sake, to carry the proposal into effect. All hope too from the Ottoman Porte, once the implacable enemy, but of late the sincere ally of Poland, faded at the same time. Fully appreciating the opportunity of escape from the insolent protection of the Russian, the Sultan, on receiving assurances of the co-operation of the French, through their ambassador General Guillemot, had prepared for hostilities, although his army of the line had been reduced to 10,000 during the late unfortunate

war. The ambassador had, however, exceeded his instructions, and was recalled in consequence by his government.

On reaching Praga on the 28th of May, Skrzynecki declined entering the capital till he had seen some of the members of the Diet, the majority of whom were favorably disposed towards him. On their appearance, he assured them that the army was still unbroken, although it had suffered severe loss in a murderous action of twelve hours, exposed to a tremendous fire of artillery,—adding, what his pierced uniform fully confirmed, that he himself had been obliged to perform the duty of a private, but that he would yet lead his men to fresh victories. This frank avowal was received with cheers by the Diet, and amidst a burst of approbation, the deputy Ledochowski moved that, imitating the Roman Senate, they should declare the general to have deserved well of his country, notwithstanding he had fought an unsuccessful battle; that so, added the deputy, he might be restored to his own confidence and to that of the army. On the presentation of this address of confidence, Skrzynecki seized the opportunity to attribute his past failures to the government, complaining of the delay occasioned in his march by the non-arrival of provisions, and tracing this neglect and other marks of inefficiency, to the too great number of members which composed it; adding, that nothing better could be hoped until the authority should be

vested in the hands of a single individual. He was certainly right in asserting that a government which did not possess the privilege of appointing or dismissing the generalissimo, ought to be changed for one of greater power. His words were not without effect upon the deputies, and on the 3rd of June, Ledochowski moved for a reform in the government, assuming Skrzynecki's demand for it, as an argument for its propriety, and forgetting that the public, disappointed in Chlopicki, was no longer disposed for military absolutism. Against this disinclination, all arguments for undivided authority proved vain ; and the question, which ought rather to have been, whether the existing government should be entrusted with a minus or plus of power, was, after six days' animated debate, rejected by a majority of only two. As it thus became evident that the government did not possess the confidence of the nation, Prince Czartoryski offered to resign, but Barzykowski alone, of all his colleagues, being disposed to follow his disinterested example, no change was made. On the other side, General Krukowiecki, a man of haughty temper, could not forget that Skrzynecki had been raised above him, after the battle of Grochow ; and his envy, at first quelled by the success of his rival, now burst forth, and he did not scruple to say, that if the Russians had not been such "*grandes bêtes*," not a Polish soldier would have escaped from Ostrolenka. He even addressed an insulting letter to Skrzynecki, who, in consequence, required his

dismissal from the command of Warsaw, a request of which Krukowiecki anticipated the result by resigning. He remained, however, in the capital, prosecuting his machinations in concert with the members of the patriotic club, which still existed under the presidency of Lelewel. Prondzynski also declared against the general-in-chief, and submitted a memoir to the government (which, however, he refused to make public), commenting on his errors. A fresh victory, however, was all that Skrzynecki now stood in need of to silence his antagonists, and for this, a most favourable opportunity soon offered.

Before he could decide on risking the main force on a new expedition, he ordered Chrzanowski to march with his 6000 men from Zamosc into Volhynia, a measure to which the other objected as useless, offering instead, another masterly suggestion, which, had it been carried into effect, might have yet ensured complete success. After Dwernicki had taken refuge in Galicia, General Rudiger had entered the Palatinate of Lublin with 16,000 men to supply the place of Kreutz, then in Lithuania. General Kayzaroff, with a corps of 6000, lay at the same time encamped near Zamosc, and General Rott, with 12,000, was still in Volhynia. For Chrzanowski therefore to enter Volhynia in the face of those three Russian corps, was but to seek a catastrophe like that of Dwernicki.

The central position of Praga favoured any attempt of the Poles upon Rudiger, since, by

moving along any radius, they would always out-march the Russians, following, as they must, in a circular line. Herein lay the virtue of that famous triangle, and Chrzanowski accordingly proposed an attack on Rudiger's corps, only stipulating that after its destruction, to which he felt very sure of contributing, 5000 men might be added to his detachment, thus rendering it strong enough to crush in succession, the various Russian corps already alluded to, and enabling him to prosecute his victorious career to Kiow. Skrzynecki at once approved the plan, promising to give him 8000 additional men, and the National Government appointed him supreme governor of Podolia, Volhynia, and Ukraina.

The precarious condition of the Russian army enhanced the chance of success. When Diebitch left the devastated environs of Ostrolenka to advance upon Pultusk, he had dispersed his troops along the Narew with a view to their obtaining food, the supply of which, as well as of military stores, had been totally cut off by the insurgents of Lithuania, and had himself taken up his head quarters at Kleczew near Pultusk, where, on the 10th of June, Count Orloff unexpectedly joined him, on a mission from St. Petersburg. This Russian noble, known in his own country as "the harbinger of death," inherits the sobriquet from his grandfather and father; the first being the celebrated favourite of the Empress Catherine, raised from the ranks in reward of his two-fold murder of her husband Peter,



by poison and strangling—the second having taken an effective part in destroying the Emperor Paul, father of Nicholas. The present Count Orloff is supposed to possess the talent of his race. The day after his arrival, Diebitch died suddenly, as first stated, of cholera, and as afterwards of apoplexy. The Russians again, said he had poisoned himself, and a Pultusk apothecary was arrested, on suspicion of having furnished him with the means. Finally a certificate signed by four Russian physicians, once more attributed his death to cholera. History may be allowed to doubt such evidence, and to record facts in the order of their occurrence. Shortly before this event, Field Marshal Count Paszkiewicz arrived in St. Petersburg from Caucasus,—a circumstance which was thought to indicate some intention on the part of the emperor to supersede Diebitch; which intention was perhaps confirmed by his own letter, requesting leave to resign. But as an abrupt dismissal would have been considered tantamount to an acknowledgment of defeat, and was not therefore to be thought of in the Russian cabinet, it was natural to recur to the policy which had already been found convenient towards many members even of the Romanoff line. The command now given to Paszkiewicz was held, *ad interim*, by General Toll; and his provisional appointment binding him, by the regulations, to act exclusively on the defensive, was a circumstance favourable to Chrzanowski's meditated expedition. The army thinned by the

late struggle, was besides obliged to wait both for reinforcements and stores. To solicit these, Count Orloff hastened to Berlin, with a letter from the empress to the king her father, who, it was not doubted, from his general habit of yielding to momentary impulse, would be easily moved to comply with his son-in-law's request.

On the 14th of June, the Poles commenced their operations. General Skarzynski, with two divisions, was sent towards Serock to observe the enemy on the Narew, Skrzynecki at the same time advancing a day's march on the chaussée of Siedlce to Siennica, where he stationed himself with a part of the forces to protect the capital, whilst General Jankowski with the rest went in quest of Rudiger. Entering Kock on the 18th, Jankowski heard with satisfaction, that the Russian general had crossed the Wieprz at Lysobyki, and had destroyed the bridge with a view to ensure the capture of General Ramorino, who had just passed the Vistula at the head of Sierawski's corps. Thus taken unawares, when he believed he had to deal only with Ramorino, Rudiger found himself in considerable perplexity. But Jankowski, in his over anxiety lest any part of the enemy's force should escape, dispersed his men over too long a line, sending General Turno, with four battalions and seven squadrons, to reconnoitre the Russians at Lysobyki. In the morning of the 19th, he fell in with their vanguard, which was quickly joined by Rudiger with his whole force.

Turno stood his ground during several hours, when, according to an order sent him, he fell back upon the main body. On the following morning, Jankowski determined to attempt repairing his blunder of the day before, and was in the act of commanding the attack, when he received a communication from Skrzynecki, who believed he had already beaten Rudiger, informing him that the great Russian army had crossed the Narew, and enjoining him to give over all pursuit, and march towards Warsaw. As the order originated in a mistake, Jankowski ought to have persevered in his plan; but perplexed, and unable to comprehend the case, he summoned a council, and proposed the question, whether to withdraw at once, or, first of all, to fight Rudiger. All, excepting General Milberg, gave their advice in writing for an immediate retreat. Thus, by an accidental misunderstanding, did the Poles lose the chance of an important victory, for not a Russian had in fact crossed the river. When General Toll assumed the provisional command, he reviewed each division in turn; and at Serock, accompanied by a numerous escort, examined the works on the banks of the Narew, the plan of which had been made under Napoleon's direction. Peter Wysocki, stationed with a battalion on the opposite side, gave notice to General Skarzynski, that they were about to pass, and the latter, calculating that the messenger could not have required less than two hours to bring him the intelligence, sent on at once to Skrzynecki,

that the enemy passed the Narew, instead of going in person to ascertain the fact. Thus misinformed, Skrzynecki was so fearful of being cut off from Warsaw, that, instead of returning from Siennica by the chaussée, he chose a much longer march, by crossing the Vistula at Potyca. The retreat of Jankowski's corps placed that of Chrzanowski in extreme danger. Conformably to his plan, he left Zamosc, and reached Lublin on the 22nd, where, instead of encountering Rudiger, as he had hoped, in his flight, he found himself confronted by a victorious body of 16,000 men, and pursued by Kayzaroff with 6000 more. Yet so rapid and masterly were his manœuvres, that, although hampered by the twenty-seven heavy guns brought from Zamosc for the defence of Warsaw, he contrived to cross to the left bank of the Vistula, losing only one man, while the Russian cavalry at Lublin lost at least 100.

The disappointment in the capital, and throughout the nation, at this failure, was extreme, and soon a universal cry of treachery was raised against Jankowski. The military council, however, summoned by him, saved him from a court martial; and, to the charge of weakness, Skrzynecki had not dared to add that of treason, until, on the evening of the 28th of June, a special communication from a distinguished Galician converted suspicion into certainty. It stated, that General Hurtig, ci-devant commander of Zamosc, under the Grand Duke Constantine, had kept up a secret correspondence with

the Russians, and that amongst his papers would be found proofs of a conspiracy conducted by Jankowski and others for arming the Russian prisoners against the capital. On the following day, warrants were issued for their apprehension, and as it was Sunday, and the monthly celebration of the 29th of November, a crowd soon gathered in the streets, and, at the sight of General Hurtig, formerly the merciless gaoler of the state prisons, their indignation broke forth. His uniform was pulled to pieces, and his hair torn from his head; and it was with much difficulty that a strong escort of the national guard could at length convey him to the Royal Castle, where he was joined by Jankowski and four others. Nor did the peril cease there. The crowd were vociferating death to the traitors, when Prince Czartoryski appeared, and his carriage was stopped by thousands, demanding justice. To restrain them, he pointed out the disgrace that would be cast by any violence upon their sacred cause. This appeal was not in vain, although some still asked for summary punishment; but the prince again assuring that the prisoners would be punished if their guilt were proved, the populace was satisfied, and would willingly have drawn his carriage in token of gratitude.

A want of money, the sinew of war, was now beginning to be felt. One hundred millions of florins had been expended, in addition to the liberal contributions forwarded to the capital from all parts of ancient Poland, and especially from Galicia. The

government, however, preferred a further appeal to the country, rather than to raise money, by drawing on the sympathy of Europe, or by mortgaging the future existence of the nation to a foreign capitalist. By a decree of the 22nd of June, the funds of all public institutions, and all the gold and silver belonging to the churches, not indispensable to divine service, were borrowed, to be returned at the close of the war. The government also gave notice that they should require horses and provisions for the use of the troops, and requested gifts of plate and jewels. These demands awakened no discontent, and the women hastened to offer their ornaments, even their wedding rings, and the people their savings, saying, "we shall be poor, but we shall have our fatherland."

When General Paszkiewicz arrived at Pultusk, towards the end of June, to replace his deceased rival, he found his army in good order, and well provided. Count Orloff had not been disappointed by Prussia; she had thrown off the mask, and was now openly assisting the Russians. The National Government, alarmed for the consequences of this decided co-operation, delivered in remonstrances to the European powers, more particularly to France and England. "For some time," they said, "while there was reason, for supposing that the Russians would triumph unassisted, Prussia had looked coolly on, or confined herself to occasional acts of vexation towards the Poles;

“ and so long as these injuries were not of vital  
 “ importance, the Poles had remained silent. But  
 “ now that their fate as a nation depended on the  
 “ course adopted by Prussia, the time for forbear-  
 “ ance was past. The Russian army, hemmed in  
 “ on all sides, could receive neither men nor pro-  
 “ visions from home. The Polish General-in-Chief,  
 “ in forming his plans, had contemplated this result ;  
 “ and now that victory seemed within his grasp,  
 “ or rather, that without even striking a blow, the  
 “ retreat of the Russian army was unavoidable,  
 “ Prussia had at once removed their difficulties, and  
 “ become their arsenal, their storehouse, and their  
 “ fortress. The Russian army, not more than 60,000  
 “ strong, once on the left of the Vistula below Plock,  
 “ could no longer communicate with the empire ;  
 “ and it was evident that no general would have  
 “ placed himself in such a position, without a pre-  
 “ vious understanding that he might rely on the  
 “ assistance of Prussia in case of defeat. The  
 “ Polish government possessed undeniable proofs  
 “ that such was the fact, and their statement would  
 “ the more easily find credit, as they could have no  
 “ motive for accusing a state with which it was ob-  
 “ viously their interest to remain in amity.” To  
 the remonstrances drawn forth from France and  
 England, by this appeal, the Cabinet of Berlin merely  
 replied, that the king had never professed neutrality,  
 but had only abstained from taking an active part ;  
 that he had always desired the ultimate success of



Russia, and had a right to contribute to it by whatever means he might think proper.

The passage of the Vistula, thus rendered practicable to the Russians, the Poles, deserted by all, after raising no less than four levies in a very short period, at length resorted to their last means of defence ; and, on the 1st of July, the Government issued the decree for the Pospolite (*levée en masse*) opening with this preface : “ In the name of God  
“ and our liberty, now on the brink of life or extinc-  
“ tion—in the name of the heroes and kings who  
“ have died for religion and mankind—for the sake  
“ of posterity, of justice, and the emancipation of  
“ Europe, we call on the ministers of Christ, on  
“ the citizens, on the cultivators, expecting rights  
“ only to be conferred by free Poland,” &c. The appeal was answered, and even from the palatinates which were actually in possession of the enemy, came bands of volunteers who served their country most efficiently. The army of the line was eager to engage, and had its chief breathed the same spirit, the hopes of the new Field Marshal might have vanished like those of his predecessor.

On the 4th of July, Paszkiewicz commenced a flank march from Pultusk towards Plock, with 86 battalions, 136 squadrons, and 300 pieces of cannon. On hearing of this extraordinary movement, Skrzynecki hastened the next day to Modlin with about 30,000 men. Fortune seemed once more to invite him to attack a foe rash enough to face thus

a large Polish force. It was indeed a bold attempt of Paszkiewicz, out of all rule, and more fitted to his previous warfare with savage tribes. It was successful, however, for Skrzynecki would not attack him, though urged on all sides. On the 8th, the Russian columns collected at Plock, as if intending to attempt the passage of the Vistula; and, on the 11th, wholly unmolested by the Poles, they drew off and marched towards the Prussian frontier, where a bridge was thrown across the river near the village of Osieck. The Pahlen corps passed first. During the passage, which occupied thirty-six hours, the Szachowskoi grenadiers and the guards remained in battle array, expecting to be attacked; and had Skrzynecki fallen on them during their separation from the Pahlen corps, they could have made but little resistance, and Paszkiewicz must have sought safety in Prussia. The Russians effected their passage unharmed on the 19th of July.

On this occasion, however, Skrzynecki's conduct had its excuse in a most unparalleled act of diplomatic treachery. The selfishness of the French government, which, true to the maxim of one of its statesmen\*, "*chacun chez soi et pour soi*," sacrificed Poland to its own narrow policy, has been mentioned. That same government which, by the mouth of Sebastiani, had proclaimed, that "*la Pologne était destinée à périr*," now stooped

\* Dupin, President of the Chamber of Deputies.

to solicit the aid of that insulted nation in one of its political negociations. When it was apprehended that the Belgian Congress would oppose the twenty-four articles drawn up in London, by which Leopold of Saxe Coburg was to hold their sceptre, Count Zaluski, then residing there as envoy for Poland, was induced, by Prince Talleyrand, to go to Brussels, and to avail himself of the sympathy subsisting between his nation and the Belgians, in order to remove their objections, Talleyrand assuring him also that these affairs once adjusted, the London Conference would immediately proceed to those of Poland. Count Zaluski effected the object of his mission, the assurance of Talleyrand that the Poles should be assisted against Nicholas, whom, for his support of the King of Holland, the Belgians regarded as their natural foe, having contributed in no small degree to his success. Fresh demurs, however, on the part of Holland, occurring to retard the arrangement, which a Russian victory on the Vistula might still further perplex, it was intimated to the two Polish envoys then in Paris, that Sebastiani having an important communication to make, invited them to meet him at the house of a Polish lady. There his first inquiry was for some Pole who might go as a French courier to Berlin, offering, at the same time, 2000 francs for the expenses of the journey. At his dictation, the Polish envoy then wrote, “ that the French ministry requested the Polish generalissimo to avoid a battle

“ for the next two months, as within that time “ Poland should be saved by France.” This dispatch, however, proved a premeditated deception ; and Sebastiani’s conduct appeared in a still more odious light, when he subsequently, in the Chamber of Deputies, dared to deny his own document, on the plea that, although he had *dictated*, he had not *written* it. It would seem that his original object was to make a show of energy on the part of the French Cabinet, in order to induce the other powers to yield the Belgian question, and, at the same time, to give Russia occupation on the Vistula sufficient to nullify her interference. His easy conscience might suggest that he was at liberty to trifle with a cause which he had already declared to be hopeless, and that there was no guilt in a measure, which, by delaying the catastrophe for two months, gave the Poles a further chance of some favourable change. His dispatch, which reached Modlin on the 6th, produced the effect designed on Skrzynecki. It did not enter into that devout and chivalrous heart to suspect the governors of a nation in amity with his own, of contemplating its ruin ; and his hopes of foreign intervention being thus apparently confirmed, he thought himself justified in turning a deaf ear to Chrzanowski and Prondzynski, and to Prince Czaratoryski, who, better able to judge than Sebastiani of the state of affairs, also urged him to attack Paszkiewicz.

Chrzanowski had gone into Podlachia about the

same time time that Skrzynecki entered Modlin, and on the 13th of July, had increased his force to 16,000 men, by uniting at Dembe Wielkie with Rybinski's division. The next day he forced General Golowin with 10,000 men to evacuate, first Minsk and then Kaluszyn, with a loss of 2000 killed and wounded, 1400 prisoners, and several pieces of cannon. Anxious to aid in defeating Paszkiewicz, he did not pursue, and had already commenced his march to Modlin, when he heard, with astonishment, that Skrzynecki had returned to Warsaw.

Meantime events of a more favourable aspect compensated in some degree for the unmolested passage of the Russians. The noble nation of the Magyars, actuated by the most generous sympathy, set an example which might have shamed the unfeeling caution of other Europeans. About the middle of July, information was received in Warsaw that the following petition from twenty-two Hungarian counties, had been presented to the Emperor of Austria, by the county palatine of Bar, on the 19th of June. "The recollection of the  
" enormous power at one time wielded by the  
" Ottoman dynasty, their long wars against Greece,  
" and the misfortunes subsequently ensuing to our  
" own country, has taught us that the great error  
" of that period lay with ourselves, in abandoning  
" the Greeks unaided to their struggle, and final  
" subjugation. An analogous case now reminds us

“ that we ought not to look with indifference on  
“ the gigantic strides of the northern colossus,  
“ whose power so rapidly increases, not by inheri-  
“ tance, nor by free popular election, but by force  
“ of arms alone. By checking it while there is yet  
“ time, by confining it to its just limits, we shall  
“ at once provide for our own security, and dis-  
“ charge a debt of gratitude to the undaunted Poles,  
“ now fighting for their national existence. By  
“ neglecting to assist them, should they fall over-  
“ whelmed, though not subdued, we fear to expose  
“ ourselves or our descendants to the like peril,  
“ from the same foe, and we may hereafter lament  
“ in vain that there is no Sobieski to deliver us.  
“ May it therefore please your Majesty graciously  
“ to consider the unhappy prospects of the Poles,  
“ should their noble efforts not be crowned with the  
“ success which the justice of their cause deserves.  
“ Their claim, Sire, on your august house, and on our  
“ country, ought never to be forgotten; they are  
“ now, with unparalleled courage and unequal force,  
“ struggling with their oppressor, and can only  
“ succeed by the greatest sacrifices. Taking into  
“ consideration besides, the danger which threatens  
“ from the north all neighbouring nations, we most  
“ humbly pray your Majesty, before it be too late,  
“ to make the fate of unhappy Poland a matter of  
“ deliberation with your faithful subjects at the  
“ approaching Diet, and in the mean time graciously  
“ to remove from us the prohibition to export arms,

“ammunition, and scythes, almost the only branch  
“of commerce left us by the severe restrictions of the  
“Custom House.” This petition, which the Hungarians accompanied by an offer of arming and maintaining 100,000 men, was rejected by the Austrian Cabinet as having come too late.

On the 9th of July, twelve deputies from the insurgent corps of Kolyszko and Rozycki took their seats in the Diet. The presence of any representatives from Podolia, Volhynia, and Ukraina, for the first time since 1793, was regarded as a triumph, and their as yet undaunted spirit raised the courage of the assembly.

Amidst the indifference, or antipathy manifested by the governments of Europe, the warm sympathy of the Germans cheered the gloomy prospects of the nation. Addresses and supplies of money, and lint, were sent to Warsaw, from Saxony, Hessen, Wirtemberg, Baden, and Bavaria. The German press was effectively encouraged by Polish committees in the various states, and the Poles and their battles were every where the theme. The feeling was contagious, and even spread through Prussia; and although the magistrates were obliged to sign certificates that they would hold no political discourse, it was found impossible to prevent the news of a Polish victory from being openly exulted in. In many cities, especially in Breslau, the expression of favour towards Russia, was often followed by insult and personal violence. The



Poles still looked towards France, and cherished the hope that on the July anniversary, “la première nation du monde” would compel its government to assist “les Français du Nord.” On that day, the national guard shouted in the court yard of the Tuileries, “Vive la Pologne,” which the citizen king echoed in a voice too low to compromise him\*. The untiring zeal of the people of Warsaw received fresh encouragement from these symptoms of foreign favour. At the appeal of the government, all classes laboured at the fortifications on the left of the Vistula, going forth to their task as in a solemn procession, adorned with garlands, waving standards, and accompanied by military music. It was an interesting moment when Prince Czartoryski approached to join in the work. The commander of the National Guard had planted on the walls the flag of the citizen hero of Warsaw, the bootmaker Kilinski. It was unfurled as the Prince appeared, and all voices welcomed him with filial love. Such feeling showed that he was worthy to have worn the thorny crown of Poland.

The intelligence of the passage of the Russians damped their hopes, and all eyes turned to the Diet, which still bestowed every mark of confidence on Skrzynecki. To relieve the general

\* The French Government contrived to entirely mystify the Parisians, by spreading a rumour of the Poles having gained a great victory.

anxiety, B. Niemoiowski moved “ that the govern-  
“ ment should summon a council of war, consist-  
“ ing of the members of the government, the  
“ general-in-chief, eleven deputies, and the generals  
“ in active service, to inquire into the military posi-  
“ tion of the country.” It met on the 27th, and  
comprehended both favourers and adversaries of  
Skrzynecki. It was opened by Prince Czartoryski,  
and the first question that arose, was, whether the  
general-in-chief should be called upon to account  
for the past, or merely required to communicate his  
plans for the future. V. Niemoiowski and Lelewel,  
strongly advocated the last proposition, and Pron-  
dzynski proposed to read his memoir; but Skrzy-  
necki forbade him, and was supported by the  
other generals, who contended that so long as he  
retained his rank, no subordinate officer had the  
right to accuse him. On being next reproached with  
having allowed the Russians to pass the Vistula,  
he replied by referring to Sebastiani’s letter. Skrzy-  
necki spoke so modestly, and yet with so much elo-  
quence, as to put to shame those who had entertained  
any mistrust of him. The majority, therefore, decided  
on proceeding to the consideration of future plans.  
It appeared that there was still sufficient ammunition  
for three more battles, but provisions for only  
twenty-eight days; and as the harvest had not yet  
commenced, and the presence of the enemy on the  
left prevented their obtaining supplies from that  
quarter, the generals rather advised to risk an

engagement, than expose the soldiers to starve by lingering near Warsaw, especially as the Russians were not more than 60,000 strong, and (what at the commencement of the war could scarcely have been anticipated,) the Poles now equalled them in number, though their cavalry was too ill-mounted for effective pursuit. Skrzynecki yielded with reluctance to the vote of the council, observing that, hitherto, he had shrunk from such a measure on his own responsibility, but that since the generals now advised it, and the Diet commanded, he was ready to perish with his whole army for the honour of the nation. His evil genius was, however, still at work, and he had no sooner left the capital on the 30th of July, than he received a letter from Count Flahault, French Ambassador at Berlin, urging him to follow Sebastiani's counsel, and at any price to avoid a battle. He hurried back, to persuade the deputies who were present at the late council, to cancel the resolution; but when, instead of this, they reiterated the injunction, he took leave of them much agitated, yet still professing himself ready to obey till his last gasp, and requesting that public prayers for the Polish arms might be offered up in all the churches.

It would seem that the insurrection was destined to end, as it had begun, in negotiations. On the 31st of July, the Russian general Tiemann, having demanded an interview with some Polish general, Chrzanowski was deputed to meet him. The imperial plenipotentiary then offered the following

conditions of peace :—1st. That things in the kingdom should be restored to the state in which they were previous to the insurrection.—2nd. That the rights of Polish nationality should be guaranteed to the sister countries.—3rd. That there should be no confiscation of property either in the kingdom or the sister countries, but full amnesty proclaimed excepting only five individuals, not named, who should, however, be permitted to dispose of their property, and emigrate.—4th. As a guarantee for the fulfilment of these promises, it was held out that Austria would pledge herself to their performance, that all Russian garrisons should be withdrawn, and that the stipulations should not be binding on the Poles till every Russian soldier had evacuated the kingdom.—5th. The Poles were required to invite the emperor, by a deputation to St. Petersburg, to a second coronation, and thus the legality of his deposition by the Diet was recognised. That such ample concessions should now be offered, when hitherto every overture of the Poles had been scornfully rejected, need not excite surprise. If, on the one hand, they seemed to bear witness to Polish valour, they were also calculated, in case of acceptance, to ensure a more complete triumph to Russia. The passage of the Vistula having been made a point of honour by either nation, Nicholas might now, without loss of dignity, make proposals for a reconciliation which would render him the dictator of Europe. The resources of the empire also being

so exhausted, that it was necessary to solicit aid from Prussia, he naturally dreaded the result of an unsuccessful battle on the left of the Vistula : besides which, the paramount obstacle to reconciliation no longer existed, the Grand Duke Constantine having died at Minsk on the 13th of July, the day after a visit from Count Orloff, the harbinger of death, on his return from Berlin. As matters now stood, so many opportunities of defeating Russia having been lost, and the national resources so exhausted, the Poles might have followed the dictates of prudence, and accepted the proffered conditions, without any impeachment of their honour or constancy. But the National Government, aware of the ill faith of Russia, refused now in their turn to listen to the autocrat. Skrzynecki also objected to these terms, though unluckily he trusted for obtaining better ones to the since celebrated phrase given by the French *Moniteur* as pronounced before the deputies by the sovereign of thirty-three millions of people—"la nationalité Polonaise ne périra pas !" When he joined the troops at Sochaczew, the Russians were already masters of an impregnable position at Lowicz, so that he was constrained to continue inactive for a time. Meanwhile public attention was unexpectedly riveted on Dembinski, who had been left by Chlapowski and Gielgud in the forest of Kurzany.

On his first advance, a thin wood had almost miraculously concealed him from a Russian column

coming from Courland ; and he had executed a very difficult march, when his satisfaction was damped by Chlapowski's absolute refusal to send him the 1st lancers, on the plea that it was only exposing those fine troops to be butchered. Thus he was abandoned with only 3800 men ; the greater part mere raw recruits, six guns, and about 450 artillery cartridges. To undertake, under such circumstances, a march of thirty days through a country overrun by the enemy, demanded great courage ; and Dembinski felt that if one only of the little band survived to tell of the attempt, neither himself nor they would be forgotten in their country's annals. Taking Vilno as the centre, he resolved to march to Poland in a circular line ; and on the 10th of July surprised and took a Russian battalion. Proceeding next to Janiszkiele, he learned that the Russian General Savoiny, who had awaited him at Szavle till the 9th, had just made room for him by evacuating Poniwir, where he captured 200 Russians and some baggage. Here he summoned a council of twelve field officers, to consult once more as to the expediency of returning to Poland ; for, though himself decidedly in favour of the measure, he chose to provide against any future charge of selfishness in abandoning Lithuania : and though, as he had expected, the majority decided for the return, yet he, the better to conceal his opinion, voted for staying. Savoiny being now in full pursuit of him, he broke up on the 14th, and had no sooner reached

Avanty on the 16th, than the Russian general fell upon him with his whole force. His destruction seemed inevitable. Strong Russian detachments were garrisoned on his right and left, and the only escape was across the lake of Inturki, by a bridge which might already be in the enemy's hands. He, however, maintained his ground till the failing light allowed him gradually to draw off his men, unperceived, to the adjacent wood ; then, contrary to the advice of the Lithuanians, approaching the lake, he found the bridge unguarded, and the next morning Savoiny beheld his intended victims safe on the opposite side. Following the course of the river Murza, Dembinski pushed on without delay to Podbrzeze, although aware that the town was garrisoned by 2000 Russians ; but as it lay in his line of retreat, he resolved to meet the danger, and rushing across the bridge at full speed, took prisoners 200 of them, besides seizing 40,000 cartridges, and, what was still more fortunate, the whole apparatus of the sappers, of which he stood in need, to enable him to cross the Vilia and Niemen. He contrived to baffle Savciny in his pursuit during three following days, and on the 19th of July arrived at Daniszew on the banks of the Vilia, several miles below Vilno. There, intercepted dispatches from Minsk apprised him, that Constantine was dead, and that the Governor of Vilno, not knowing his real force, and apprehensive of his attacking Dunneburgh, had detached two regiments to the Dwina, and two to the Vileyka. Of



this good fortune he availed himself by crossing the Vilia at once. He then continued his march still unmolested towards the Niemen, which he intended to cross at Zboiska ; but seeing a detachment of Russian hussars on the opposite side, he believed himself surrounded, and was about to conceal himself in a neighbouring wood, when he learned that those men themselves were flying from the insurgents of Novogrodek, and on seeing him, they fled once more. He had crossed on the morning of the 22nd ; and on seeing the river between the again baffled enemy and his men, he ordered a gun to be fired in token of his moral triumph.

It will for ever be a matter of wonder, how 3800 raw soldiers, pursued by a corps of 8000 men, could effect their retreat during a fourteen days' march through a country where, from Kurszany and Courland to the Niemen, they had to pass within a few miles of seventeen places where the enemy had garrisons, every one of which respectively exceeded them in number. It may be said, and truly, that fortune favoured Dembinski ; but fortune in war is variable, and it is by the manner in which a general avails himself of lucky events that his real capacity is displayed. Although the want of skill of the Russian generals contributed to Dembinski's success, the strategist must acknowledge his superior military talent, and the historian his high moral courage.

From the Niemen, Dembinski directed his course towards the forest of Bialowies, where he again con-

trived to elude the enemy. At Novogrodek, he was joined by 300 insurgents ; and 3000 Russians sent against them by the Governor of Slonim, so little expected Dembinski's arrival in that quarter, that they hastily retired on perceiving his vanguard. Sending some of the cavalry in pursuit of them, he feigned a design upon Slonim with the main body, and then suddenly advanced to the river Szczara, between which and Dereczyn is a dyke four miles long, having six bridges. Had the enemy been more on the alert, Dembinski's expedition must have terminated here ; but on the report of his march upon Slonim, 500 hussars, by quitting Dereczyn, to cover the threatened position, left him a free passage along the dyke, which must have seemed almost providential to him, as an intercepted dispatch had stated that all the bridges over the Szczara having been destroyed, Dembinski would be compelled to surrender. He reached the forest on the 27th, and found it surrounded by Russian troops, as some insurgent bands within still carried on their warfare. Here, like another Columbus, he was exposed to a still greater peril than all the past, and from his own companions in arms. A report was spread through the corps by an officer whom he had severely reprimanded for breach of discipline, that he had sold them to the Russians ; and, as ever since Gielgud's affair, suspicions of treachery had become familiar to men's minds, the falsehood found believers. The sight also of more troops approach-

ing seemed to sanction the charge, and greatly increased the peril of his situation. But nowise daunted, Dembinski at once placed the ringleader of the discontent under arrest, and by a short explanatory address, recovered the confidence of his men, who were further tranquillised by recognising, in the apprehended enemies, a band of Poles. It was the Polish General Rozycki, with 1000 men, whose late progress from Siedlce to Lithuania had been attended with numerous, though not very important successes. On the 28th he had a severe contest with a Russian force, which was laying siege to the forest; and at Narewka, on the 29th, he heard that Dembinski was arrived, and marched forward to meet him. The latter, after the late painful occurrences, was so overpowered with joy at his appearance, that he knelt down, and, with tears in his eyes, returned thanks to Heaven. Rozycki was at first unwilling to go back, but consented, on Dembinski representing the impossibility of holding out longer in Lithuania. The last and perhaps the greatest of his perils still awaited Dembinski. General Rosen had been for eight days on the look out for him with a strong force at Siematycze, and had made so sure of his prize, that in his preposterous exultation he used to say daily, as he pointed out the spot on the map to his officers, "here Dembinski must perish!" He was the more vigilant, as the capture of this devoted band would have been some compensation for the loss of his own corps of

30,000 men ; but Dembinski detached some cavalry upon Bronsk ; and while Savoiny's and Rosen's vanguards were expecting him in that quarter, he was entering the kingdom by Sterdin. On hearing of his escape, Rosen, it is said, tore his hair with vexation, and uttered bitter imprecations against himself. On the 3rd of August Dembinski approached Marki, three miles from Praga : and here a triumph awaited him such as he had never dreamt of. Prince Czartoryski, accompanied by some generals and several members of the Diet, first came out to give him welcome, under the impression that he had only effected a lucky escape. No one indeed knew the extent of his achievement, yet, as if by a secret intimation of the honour rendered to the country, the population of the city poured out in throngs to meet him. Colonel Sierakowski hurried forward before his regiment to catch a sight of his wife and family ; and his little son, a boy of five years old, being lifted on his horse, repeated the lines of Krasicki, " Oh, sacred " love of the dear Fatherland," while the people listened to the infantine accents with gushing tears. When finally Dembinski appeared, the simultaneous cheer of at least 60,000 voices, and the cry of " Poland is not yet lost," told him that his worth was at least appreciated, though the precise nature of his recent efforts might not yet be understood. His soldiers, worn out with fatigue, clothed as they were in Russian uniforms of all regiments, furnished with weapons not less various, and with horses and

accoutrements, Samogitian, Polish, Circassian, Cabardian, and Cossack, bore witness, by their motley and picturesque exterior, to their past difficulties. The women and children followed the crowd still thickening round Dembinski, kissing his hands and feet, and shouting wishes for his long life. Before the vice-regal palace, he was met by the other members of the government, and there V. Niemoiowski thus addressed him :—" General! forsaken by fortune, you did not forsake the cause. We thank you in the name of the nation ; you have restored husbands to their wives,—to the country her sons."—"Wives," rejoined Dembinski abruptly, " must now expect to become widows, for by thus receiving us, you so raise the spirit of self-sacrifice, that at the next opportunity every one will brave certain death, rather than not prove himself worthy of the country." The Diet bestowed on him and his men an honour never before conferred on any general. A vote was passed, " that they had deserved well of their country;" and printed copies of it were presented to every officer and soldier. No one, except Chlopicki, had ever arrived at such popularity; but it required extreme tact to maintain it amidst the irritation and anxiety now pervading all parties. Dembinski, whose speech was as sharp as his sword, and who would no more have spared his friends (if he had any,) than his adversaries, loudly censured all who were dissatisfied with Skrzynecki, whose noble character, courage, and patriotism he revered.

On being appointed Governor of Warsaw, he was scarcely installed in his new office, before he drew upon himself universal odium. One of the National Guard having called the Governor of Praga a traitor, Dembinski would have had him shot for the offence, and the government was obliged to interfere, and pronounce that such an act was beyond the limits of his authority.

The Diet, still farther augmented by seventeen Lithuanian deputies, now took upon itself to express the public impatience at the continued inactivity of the general-in-chief; and, on the 9th, sent three members of the government and ten senators and deputies to his head quarters, with directions to ascertain the sentiments of the army, and to supersede him in case he no longer possessed their confidence. After the 4th of August, the Poles had occupied a position at Sochaczew, having their centre on the chaussée; but Skrzynecki, in the fear that the Russians, by advancing upon Bolimow, might outflank him and get to Warsaw, resolved to take that station himself. The troops on arriving at the extensive plain before Bolimow, believed that a battle was at length intended, and cheered him loudly wherever he passed. These shouts he continued to excite by his presence, as an evidence to the delegates of the Diet who were then at hand, and whose mission he comprehended, of the goodwill they entertained for him,—and in truth, the deputies were perplexed, and half tempted to accept

this burst of enthusiasm as an intimation that their mission was closed. At length, however, they resolved to notify to Skrzynecki, who was apparently quite regardless of their arrival, that a deputation from the Diet desired an interview. At first, his tone towards them was rather ironical, as if he supposed them come to assist him in beating the enemy; and on their inquiring for some place of conference, he pointed out a barn close to his head quarters. In that barn the fate of Poland was decided. There they at once requested him to explain frankly, why he persisted in temporising, when the enemy was so anxious to fight, and the capital so discontented. Without entering into military details, of which the deputies would have understood but little, he assured them, in general terms, that no man loved his country more than he did, but that honour and duty, no less than experience, forbade him to shed one drop of blood contrary to his convictions, and that no popular or ill-judging cry should force him to set all upon a single die, by giving battle at Bolimow. The arguments of the deputies were vain. He again declared, that if he were to come off with the loss of one life, he never would give his consent to the battle, but if the Diet should think fit to appoint some other ready to risk it, he was, on his part, ready to serve under that person in any capacity, in which he would do his duty as a soldier and a Pole.

Pursuant to their instructions, the delegates then



desired him to summon all the generals, colonels, and commanders of artillery companies. These soon assembled to the number of 200, and from their respective written statements, it was evident that Skrzynecki had lost the confidence of the troops, but that a battle at Bolimow was considered by the officers as impracticable, and that they in consequence advised a retreat towards the vicinity of Warsaw, there to adopt a new plan of operations. After these statements, the deputation was bound to elect a new generalissimo, and another council of sixty-seven generals and colonels was called for this purpose. Twenty-two of these voted in favour of Skrzynecki, considering that his firmness of character and matchless valour in defence, rendered him the fittest commander in the actual state of the war. As there was no majority in favour of either of the three other candidates, the deputation appointed Dembinski provisional commander until further orders from the Diet. Ever prompt to obey, he arrived at Bolimow on the 11th, but on becoming more distinctly acquainted with the proceedings of the delegates towards Skrzynecki, he severely censured their convening a military diet under the very eye of the enemy. As they appeared to entertain some doubts of Dembinski, and actually forced Prondzynski upon him as the chief of his staff, he would only consent to hold the command for sixty hours. His present position was by no means enviable. Having acquired his high rank

and character at a distance from the principal scene of action, he was but little known to the army, and had besides to contend against the military prejudices of the infantry officers, by whom it was considered irregular to entrust the supreme command to a general, who, at the outbreak of the war, had been merely the chief of a squadron. Fully aware of these disadvantages, he was anxious to obtain Skrzynecki's patronage, and at his own request, was presented by him to the troops on the 12th of August. They naturally felt some regret at parting with the general who had so often led them to battle and to victory ; and his noble countenance, his composed and stately bearing, and the more than ordinary pathos of his voice, formed a contrast with the toil-worn aspect of his successor, by no means favourable to the latter. All the regiments unanimously cheered him, while they received Dembinski in torturing silence, who, losing his presence of mind, joined in their applause, and told them that he wished only to imitate their late chief, a man without fear or reproach. Quickly they drew the inference, and asked themselves what had they gained, if the new commander meant to follow in the steps of the old one, and to his faults would probably not join his brilliant qualities ; and from that moment he lost their confidence.

Upon receiving the report of their delegates, stating that the present embarrassment had arisen from the participation of the generalissimo in the executive,

the Diet resolved that the office should in future be held without any share in the government and by its appointment. This decree annulled the nomination of Dembinski, for V. Niemoiowski and Morawski the constitutionalists, and Lelewel, the would-be revolutionist, could not forget nor forgive his aversion to the interference of the civil authority in military affairs. It was, however, easier to dismiss one generalissimo than to find another. Prondzynski refused the high trust, alleging that, although not a fit commander-in-chief, Skrzynecki was yet the best infantry officer, and, as it was not to be expected that he would serve under one who had been his accuser, the army would thus be deprived of his valuable services. As the three already named members persisted in refusing their votes to Dembinski, as also to Chrzanowski, who had incautiously advocated military dictatorship, the perplexed government dispatched the Deputy Zwierkowski to the camp, to offer the chief command to General Malachowski, or, in case of his refusal, once more to Prondzynski, and should he still decline, Zwierkowski was authorised to invest Lubienski with temporary command. Meantime Dembinski had divided the army into three corps, one of which he placed under Skrzynecki, and in conformity to the decision of the military council, left Bolimow for Warsaw on the 15th. Towards noon his rear-guard, under Ramorino, was overtaken at Szymanow, and had not Dembinski felt con-

scious that he was actually no longer in command, he would have seized that opportunity for a general engagement.

The real motives for the return of the army not being known in Warsaw, a report arose there, that Dembinski and Skrzynecki had combined to assume a dictatorial power, which the apparently usurping proceedings of the one, and the imprudence of the other at Bolimow greatly tended to confirm, and which Lelewel and his set, rendered yet more alarming by their ignorant anticipations of danger.

The 15th of August was a holiday, and the streets were thronged when the news that the army was on the retreat, reached the capital. The patriotic club, secretly worked upon by Krukowiecki's agents, immediately assembled, and resolved to depute three members to demand from government the dismissal of Skrzynecki, and the immediate punishment of the state prisoners. On arriving at the Royal Palace, where the members of the government had assembled, and obtaining admission under pretext of an audience for the people of Warsaw, they dilated on the general consternation at the return of the army; adding also their recommendation to government to take measures for the public safety, and without further delay, to pronounce sentence on the state prisoners. With his usual affability, Prince Czartoryski condescended to assure them, that the government was not neglectful; that although the situation of affairs was difficult, it was not desperate; and

that the decision concerning the prisoners, which had been delayed by the number of documents to be examined, would very shortly be made public. Such of the clubbists as still kept within the bounds of propriety, were satisfied with this reply ; but one of them presuming to stigmatize Skrzynecki as a traitor, they were desired to retire. Lelewel, pale, and seemingly absorbed in reading, had remained silent during the whole scene ; but on being reproached by the Governor of Warsaw for fomenting the disorders, he did not attempt to deny the charge.

The clubbists next endeavoured to inflame the populace, by insinuating that the government were endeavouring to delay the passing sentence against the prisoners, who were already acquitted of the charge of high treason ; and Jankowski was about to be absolved by a court martial from that of insubordination, or rather of incapacity. Ever ready to become the tool of demagogues, and blinded by Krukowiecki's agents, the mob proceeded towards evening to the Royal Castle, intending to execute their execrable justice ; but a shower coming on dispersed them quickly, just as Prince Czartoryski, who had been warned that his life was threatened that night, drove by on his way to the camp.

At night-fall, all signs of the storm, which had lowered during the day, having disappeared, the governor and the commander of the national guard,

not suspecting that the vigilant Krukowiecki was labouring in darkness to perfect his plot, imprudently neglected taking further precautions, when, at half-past eleven, about 100 men, of respectable appearance, rushed to the gates of the castle. Some sixty of the national guard on watch fired, upon which the agents of Krukowiecki immediately raising the cry of "the guard is butchering the people," accompanied by assurances that their only object was to ensure the punishment of the traitors, whom the guards also viewed as such, overcame all resistance, and got possession of the prisoners. Jankowski was first dragged forward; and, on the remark of some of the guard, that the palace of Polish kings ought not to be polluted with blood, he was hurried away, and hanged on the nearest lantern-post. His companions suffered the same fate, whilst another party of the mob, also led by Krukowiecki's emissaries, murdered thirty sp'ies in the prison of Wola. The whole affair took up but a quarter of an hour.

Meantime, Niemoiowski, Barzykowski, and Morawski receiving notice of the assumption of the authority of governor by Krukowiecki, although the former governor still nominally held the office, deemed it more prudent to render him responsible by confirming him in the charge than to permit him to usurp it unauthorised.

The three beforenamed generals having all refused

the supreme command, the constitutionalists at length yielded, and gave their votes to Dembinski, and he, on hearing of these lamentable occurrences, approached Warsaw that same evening. The next morning, the 17th, he rode into the city, determined by the late excesses, to proclaim himself dictator. As a preparatory step, he issued an address to the army, representing the horrors of the 15th, as a deep device of the enemy, in the prosecution of which, not even children nor pregnant women had been spared. This, however, was not true, for except a Russian woman, no female nor child perished, and the crimes of that night were wholly chargeable on the clubbists. Seventeen of them were next brought to a court-martial. He then hastened to the Royal Palace, where he found that the government, on the motion of Prince Czartoryski, had just dissolved itself, from unwillingness to associate any longer with Lelewel. Dembinski now deemed the moment come for his assumption of the supreme power; but he gave way to his friends, who entreated him to consult the Diet. Upon the very first mention of his pretensions, the deputies threatened to fire upon him rather than sanction them, and unwilling to add another bloody page to his country's annals he relinquished his project. The Diet then met to provide a new government, and at the suggestion of B. Niemoiowski, resolved that it should in future consist of an irresponsible president (a constitutional king), who should appoint six responsible



ministers, as also a commander-in-chief, but that he should not be eligible to that office himself. During the debate, the palace was surrounded by cannon, the gunners standing ready with matches lighted. The astonished deputies anxiously inquired of each other the cause of this precaution, some conceiving it to be a device of Dembinski to terrify them into electing him president, whilst the greater part attributed it with more reason to Krukowiecki. Aware of their apprehensive state of mind, he had circulated lists of certain deputies whose lives were threatened, and this stratagem, added to their exaggerated idea of his influence over the citizens, secured to him a majority of votes.

At the moment of Krukowiecki's usurpation, scarcely any part of their country, excepting Warsaw, Modlin, and Zamosc, remained in the possession of the Poles. General Rozycki being appointed governor of the palatinates of Kalish, Sandomir, and Cracow, had departed with his small band for Sandomir on the 4th of August, but arrived too late to prevent Rudiger from crossing the Vistula with 14,000 men and eighteen cannon. Having collected from the various depots, eight cannon and about 5,000 men, amongst them C. Rozycki's Volhynian regiment, he awaited the Russians at Ilza on the 9th, and for seven hours resisted their overwhelming superiority of force. C. Rozycki, at the head of his cavalry, drawn up as usual, in single rank, advanced against the dragoons of Colonel Gienich,

a man not less chivalrous than himself. They seemed to seek each other out, and whilst their troops made a sudden pause, they amazed them by a single combat, recalling those of Homer. At length, the Russian fell, and his men were cut to pieces. Rozycki, however, retired during the night, in order to guard 14,000 Russian prisoners in the palatinate of Cracow.

The Russian army now poured in from all quarters, and encompassed Warsaw. Paszkiewicz lay encamped before the walls with 70,000 men and 350 cannon. Kreutz was marching in from Lithuania, with 25,000,—Rosen, with 16,000, was stationed a few miles from Praga,—Kayzaroff and Rudiger, with their respective corps of 10,000 and 14,000 men, were in the palatinate of Lublin, and Sandomir; and Rott was daily expected from Volhynia with 16,000. The Polish army at Warsaw, including the garrison of Praga, reckoned about 60,000 regulars, with 140 field pieces, besides 5000 national guards, and the garrisons of Modlin and Zamosc; and thus the forces of both nations were as numerous as at the commencement of the war, and, as then, a defeat of either would have been decisive, since both had put at stake all their available resources. But it was no longer with the Poles as at Grochow, when they had four unoccupied palatinates to fall back upon. Now shut up in Warsaw, their provisions and ammunition exhausted, their only hope was, by one last great struggle, to recon-

quer their country, or to perish in the attempt. But to Krukowiecki the insurrection seemed already at an end, and he was desirous to retain his power, with the sole view to employ it in the final pacification, and monopolise an advantageous result of the catastrophe. On the 19th, summoning a council of war, he invidiously asked what remained to be done in the situation to which Skrzynecki had reduced the country? Chrzanowski advised battle on the plains of Warsaw, before the enemy could collect their force, though the dismounted state of the cavalry rendered this measure hazardous. Dembinski proposed to abandon Warsaw, and march into Volhynia; a bold plan, which, if adopted, would at least have protracted the war six months longer. The rejection of both these alternatives did but afford another proof of the inefficiency of military councils, and it was resolved to adopt the more practicable, but less vigorous proposition of the three, and send two corps, one against Rosen, and the other into the palatinate of Plock, each with the object of providing the army and the city with provisions. Krukowiecki was so much alarmed by the plan of Dembinski, which must necessarily have brought his reign to a speedy close, that he immediately dismissed him, under the pretext of disobedience to orders in suffering Skrzynecki to remain in the camp\*, and induced Malachowski to take his

\* Skrzynecki was then compelled to take refuge at the Austrian consul's residence.

place, by assurances that he should be relieved from all responsibility on every important occasion by the decision of a council of war.

On the night of the 20th, Lubienski, with 4000 cavalry, departed for the Plock palatinate; and 20,000 men, with 40 cannon, under General Ramorino, marched against Rosen in Podlachia. Prince Czartoryski, the guiding star of the insurrection, accompanied them, exchanging his late dignified station for the fatigue and danger of a camp. Ramorino, admirable for his personal valour, and precision in executing a plan, showed himself so utterly incapable of concerting one, that the prince, at the very commencement of the march, found himself compelled to apply to Krukowiecki for a more able commander. Prondzynski was accordingly dispatched from Warsaw, and would at once have attempted to cut off Rosen from Brzesc Litewski; but this general, forewarned by Rudiger with promises of succour, that Ramorino was approaching, hastily withdrew to Miedzyrzec, destroying all the bridges behind him. He had got so far, that Prondzynski, losing hope of overtaking him, detached a division of infantry towards Kock, for the chance of enticing Rudiger to cross; and, on the 29th, with the remainder of his force, followed in the track of Rosen. The latter, reinforced at Miedzyrzec, awaited the Poles there in a strong position; but Prondzynski, amusing him by a show of intending to attack the town, sent an infantry division and two cavalry regiments through

the wood to Rogoznica, situated behind Miedzyrzec, upon the chaussée of Brzesc Litewski, and where there was an equally strong party of the enemy. Exulting in the thought of at length encountering their foe, the Poles rushed on them at the point of the bayonet, and for a long time refusing to give quarter, killed 3000 of them in an entrenched cemetery, and took 2000 prisoners, whilst Rosen availed himself of the darkness to quit Miedzyrzec. The object of the expedition was effected, for the capital was now furnished with two months' provisions; but Ramorino, after Prondzynski's return thither, still continued to pursue Rosen, who, but an hour's march in advance, succeeded in crossing the Bug at Brzesc Litewski.

In the meantime, the Lelewel party at length woke from their delusion, and perceiving that Krukowiecki would hasten the ruin of the country, conspired against his life. He discovered their plot, and employing one regiment to guard his residence, he sent away the best part of the national guard to Karczew, upon the pretext, that the enemy were about to throw a bridge there across the Vistula, and prohibited the arming of 14,000 of the guard of safety; a measure to which even the Diet had assented. Thus did Lelewel twice injure his country; first, in bringing Krukowiecki into power; and then, by his treasonable intrigues, depriving the capital of its best defenders.

When Kreutz joined the Russian army on the 27th, Paszkiewicz determined on assaulting Warsaw during the absence of Ramorino's corps. Desirous

to lull the Poles into security, he sent an officer to Warsaw on the 4th of September to offer peace, on condition of their evacuating the city, and once more acknowledging the emperor as their monarch, in which case things were to remain as they had been previous to the insurrection. To offers which in fact implied unconditional submission, Krukowiecki's ministers would not listen, and the next day Prondzynski bore for answer to the Russian camp, that the Poles would treat only on the principle of national independence. Still Krukowiecki did not seem to apprehend an assault, and, although an aide-de-camp departed that very morning for Miedzyrzec, neglected to recall Ramorino. At this critical moment the Polish forces in Warsaw amounted to about 30,000 men and 92 field pieces ; its strongest material defences consisting in the barricades across the streets, and in various mines prepared beneath. The rampart beyond the walls was, in general, only musket proof, although, at certain points, it had been strengthened to resist artillery. A double chain of *lunettes* outside the ramparts surrounded the city, and to defend all these works the besieged possessed only 108 heavy pieces of cannon. The line of operations extending eleven miles, the average of defensive force was one soldier to every six feet ; and as the city, by its position on the vast plain of Wola, where the Poles used formerly to elect their kings, was accessible on all sides, and that the Russians were at liberty to choose their point of

attack, it was evident that no stand could be made beyond the walls.

The Russian army now amounted to 108 battalions, 120 squadrons, and 386 cannon, in all about 100,000 men. In the night of the 5th, they decamped from Raszyn, and drawing up opposite to Wola, left no room for doubting that the assault was intended to begin the next day, though it might be a question whether they would open the attack on that point, the most strongly fortified of all. On the 6th, the two months' delay demanded by France was to expire, yet she made no effort to save the Poles, though but for her treacherous interference not a Russian would by that time have been left in their land.

On the 6th, at five in the morning, the Russians opened a ninety-gun battery upon two *lunettes* to the left of Wola, the one defended by two infantry companies, with five guns, and the other by one company and four guns. The Russian battery played for an hour before it could silence these four cannon, after which four regiments rushed to the assault. The Poles fought desperately, and even when finally driven from the breast work, some of the privates who would have surrendered, were killed by their own officers. The *lunette* being scaled on the left, the rest gathering together on the right, fought, till even, by the Russian statement, four men only remained alive. This was a company of the 8th of the line, which, before the insurrection, had been



commanded by Skrzynecki ; and thus would he, had he remained at the head of the army, with them have fought and fallen. The other *lunette* party was assailed by five regiments ; they also resisted, with great havoc of the enemy, until only eleven men of the two companies being left, Lieutenant Novosielski set fire to a powder magazine, blowing up himself and them, and strewing the earth around him with Russian corpses. This carnage lasted two hours. The battery of Wola was too remote to afford assistance ; and General Bem, who had a reserve of fifty cannon, remaining passive at the Warsaw observatory, under the impression that the main attack would still take place at the barrier of Mokotow, the Russians having in fact made some demonstration on that side, but were repulsed with loss by Uminski.

At seven o'clock, a one-hundred gun battery was opened against Wola, which was defended by 2000 infantry and eight cannon ; one battalion being commanded by Peter Wysocki, and the whole corps by General Sowinski, who, on that day nineteen years back, had lost a leg at the assault on Mozaysk, and had, at his own earnest request, been entrusted with this stronghold, which he had vowed never to surrender but with life. His eight guns being soon silenced, thirty battalions rushed forwards on all sides. The slaughter continued for an hour after the enemy had forced the village, the Poles disputing every inch of ground till Wysocki, being mortally

wounded and a prisoner, Sowinski retired into a church, where, seated in a chair, refusing quarter, he continued firing the loaded muskets laid by his side till he also expired, pierced by many bayonets, “ still preserving, even in death,” said a Russian eye-witness, “ a menacing aspect.” Paszkiewicz then pushed forward numerous squadrons towards the barrier of Wola, which Bem repulsing with his admirable artillery, the Poles were tempted to endeavour to recapture the place ; but the Russians presenting themselves in great numbers before Mokotow, and Krukowiecki asserting that their main attack would be in that quarter, only four battalions, one of which belonged to the 4th of the line, could be spared for this service. Supported by Bem with his artillery, and two squadrons, they advanced with matchless energy, while Paszkiewicz, equally resolved on retaining his conquest, poured out fresh columns upon them. The Russians represent this as the severest part of the action. Three times were their battalions driven back into Wola ; but the Poles being unable to force an entrance, or any longer to support the tremendous fire, desisted from their enterprise, and retired about four o’clock. A cannonade through the whole line wound up that day’s struggle. Only one small part of the outer line of fortification was lost, the Russians having been unsuccessful at every other point.

On the failure of this attempt to retake Wola, Krukowiecki announced to his ministers, that the

fall of Warsaw could not be protracted beyond the following day, and that he therefore demanded an authority to treat. They replied, in the words of the national motto, "conquer, or die;" whereupon he referred to the standing committees of the Diet, who, under the impression that he would not overstep his authority, but was only endeavouring to gain time for Ramorino's return, gave him to understand that, according to existing laws, he certainly had the right to negotiate. It was late in the evening when their opinion reached him, and towards midnight he charged Prondzynski with the following letter to Paszkiewicz :—"Blood has again flowed; thousands of fresh victims have fallen. The President of the National Government therefore considers it his duty to inquire whether the terms on which the generalissimo of the Imperial troops will consent to treat, are such as the Poles may accept consistently with their honour and safety." At three o'clock in the morning Prondzynski delivered this letter to Paszkiewicz, who agreed to suspend hostilities till nine, at which hour Krukowiecki was to come to Wola to arrange the conditions of peace. Accompanied by Prondzynski, he arrived, and was received by Paszkiewicz and the Grand Duke Michael. On the plea that the capture of Wola had materially changed the aspect of affairs in his favour, the Field Marshal now demanded unconditional submission, and the surrender of Warsaw. Krukowiecki replying that before he could comply,

he must have the authority of the Diet, and throwing out hopes that he might obtain it, the armistice was prolonged till two o'clock in the afternoon. His ministers in the meantime abhorring any share in such treasonable proceedings, sent in their resignations. Deprived of their countenance, Krukowiecki sent Prondzynski to the Diet, in order to obtain their sanction by exaggerating the danger. His nerves, shaken by long imprisonment under Constantine, and at this moment distracted by passionate anxiety for the fate of his young wife, exposed, like others, to fall into the hands of the Russians, Prondzynski fulfilled his mission with dishonourable ability. On entering the Diet, he demanded a private audience, and introduced his subject with nervous eagerness, stating, that in going round the Russian camp with Paszkiewicz, he had observed all with a keen eye, and had beheld, in the first line, 20,000 men, in front of whom stood multitudes of volunteers provided with engines for the siege, "destined," so said Paszkiewicz, "to fill the ditch with their bodies, over which 60,000 more were ready to pass." He had also seen their well-stored magazines of ammunition. The Poles, he reminded the Diet, had only 14,000 effective men, not enough to defend the town for another hour from the savage enemy, wild to slaughter, burn, plunder, dishonour, and destroy. He called upon them, therefore, to save the capital of Poland, the cradle of her civilization, of science, and art. He represented the

conqueror, as promising to respect the treaty of Vienna, to restore things to their former state—as offering full amnesty to the kingdom, mercy to the sister provinces, liberty of the press, and the departure of every Russian soldier ; and concluded by saying, that should the honour of the Diet forbid them to accept the terms, there was yet a resource, for Krukowiecki was ready to take upon himself the painful duty ; and that the Diet had but to adjourn, and authorise him in general terms to conclude a treaty. Yelowiecki rose to counteract the effect of his coward eloquence. He had just spoken, he said, with Bem, who warned him not to trust Krukowiecki, asserting also—and he, Bem, was a competent judge—that the city could still hold out twenty-four hours, until the arrival of Ramorino, and that the Russians having already expended as much ammunition as Napoleon had provided for the whole Moscow campaign, would not be able to maintain another such cannonade as that of the preceding day. Abide, therefore, by your manifesto, he added ; recollect that Russia must ultimately observe the treaty of Vienna, to avoid a war with the other powers. These words restored the courage of the deputies. The clock struck one ; Prondzynski, incessantly drawing out his watch, repeated continually, “ Gentlemen, decide. You “ have still another hour, and then the roar of the “ cannon will be heard, and the enemy will burst “ into the city.” At a quarter to two, the Russians broke the armistice, and opened a tremendous fire of

two hundred guns, in a line perpendicular to the palace of the Diet. This, answered by a Polish battery of eighty guns, caused the building to shake. A deputy then rose, and admonished his colleagues to await in their places the issue of the combat, and to dismiss the general to the field, where he might be of use. This proposal was received with acclamations, and Prondzynski was charged with the verbal answer, that the president must conduct any negotiations according to the existing laws. The marshal then moved that the public should be re-admitted; and the deputies resumed a debate respecting the gift of landed property to the peasantry, that the enemy on coming might find them occupied to the last, with the welfare of the people.

Still keeping up the fire from Wola, at three o'clock the Russians commenced a severe attack on the left, which was resisted till five by Uminski, who entirely destroyed two hussar regiments. The Poles were less successful in the direction of Wola, and were obliged to abandon the rest of the 3rd line of fortification. Paszkiewicz having been wounded at the commencement of the assault, Toll assumed the command, and prepared to make a decisive attack.

Meanwhile Krukowiecki availed himself of the message from the Diet to send Prondzynski to the Russian camp, with authority "to conclude a treaty." The Grand Duke Michael could not believe in this authority until Prondzynski affirmed it upon

his honour. General Berg was then sent with him to Warsaw, but returned to Wola, on finding that Krukowiecki could not in fact produce it in writing. Upon this, the latter sent in his resignation, which the Diet accepted, and was debating on the election of B. Niemoiowski, when the attack upon the suburb of Wola commenced, and Prondzynski again demanded from the Diet a written statement of its former verbal communication. The Diet complied reserving, however, to itself the right of ratification. Krukowiecki now made a treacherous use of the authority he had obtained, by addressing the following letter to the Emperor Nicholas :—"Sire, " chargé dans ce moment même du pouvoir de " parler à votre Majesté Impériale et Royale au " nom de la nation Polonaise, je m'adresse par son " Excellence M. le Maréchal Comte Paszkiewicz " d'Erivan à votre cœur paternel. En nous soumet- " tant *sans aucune condition* à votre Majesté notre Roi, " la nation Polonaise sait qu'Elle seule est à même " de faire oublier le passé, de guérir les plaies pro- " fondes qui ont laceré ma patrie." Prondzynski consented even to carry this letter.

The attack on the suburb of Wola continued. The Russians having forced one *lunette*, assailed the others in flank with their artillery, and the Poles were thus obliged to abandon the second line after a desperate but useless struggle. The houses in the suburbs were then set on fire, and the combat continued in the gardens. The



Russians thrice advanced to the barrier, but, deprived of the aid of their artillery, could make no progress against the 4th of the line, who gave no quarter, and they suffered severe loss. Towards ten o'clock at night Uminski, who had not lost a single *lunette* of the 2nd line, found himself in the rear of the enemy; and Malachowski sought to avail himself of this advantage to fall upon them, but found to his astonishment, that the greater part of the army as well as the whole reserve of artillery were already in Praga. The treachery of Krukowiecki was now beyond a doubt, and the Diet, informed of it by Malachowski, at length dismissed him, upon which he fled, in fear of the Russians, whom he had deceived no less than his country. By this time Prondzynski had returned with General Berg to Warsaw, and was much surprised at finding B. Niemoiowski in the place of Krukowiecki, with whom alone he would consent to treat; and the new president on his part was equally perplexed, for the greater part of the troops having been induced to withdraw, the surrender of the city was becoming indispensable. At length the Russian general consented to accept a convention, to be signed by the marshal of the Diet; but he declared that no force should compel him to such an act, and it became necessary to send after Krukowiecki, who was five miles distant. He, however, refused his signature to any thing but a definitive treaty of peace. Finally, the veteran Malachowski was pre-

vailed upon to sign a convention in the name of the army, by which the Poles engaged to evacuate Warsaw and Praga, and retire into the palatinate of Plock, in order to carry on negotiations with St. Petersburg; and the Russian general, on his part, accorded a truce of thirty-six hours, to give the Poles time to remove their military stores; a compliance, for which his desire to terminate the war by negotiation can alone account, for the convention was not signed till eight o'clock in the morning of the 8th, whilst the Polish troops went off to Praga before six. At half-past eleven the Russians entered Warsaw; at twelve the Poles left Praga for Modlin, followed by the members of the Diet, the editors of the press, and a great number of civilians. Prondzynski remained as a hostage; and Krukowiecki, who would have accompanied the army, but for Dembinski threatening to shoot him, returned to Warsaw. Eleven other generals also remained there, amongst whom, though against his will, was Chrzanowski, whom B. Niemoiowski had dismissed, on the false report that during his governorship, he had prevented the people from arming, the measure having been Krukowiecki's, countenanced by the Diet, in consequence of the alarm inspired by the intrigues of the Lelewel party.

In the two days' assault, the loss of the Russians, according to their own return, was 10,000 killed and wounded, 500 of whom were officers. Their artillery suffered severely, thirty-nine officers, 400

cannoneers, and 800 horses having perished; but allowing for the little veracity of their bulletins, their loss may be estimated at double the number; and it is well known that not less than 12,000 of their wounded were lodged in the Warsaw hospitals. They computed the killed and wounded of the Poles to be 9000, that is nearly the same as their own; the absurdity of which is manifest, when it is remembered that the Poles fought from behind the ramparts, and that the Russians were the assailants. But for Krukowiecki's treachery, the Poles might undoubtedly have held on some fifty hours, till the arrival of Ramorino, though at the risk of exposing the city to conflagration from the Russian cannon.

Ramorino, who was still at Miedzyrzec on the 7th, when he heard that the assault had commenced, instantly broke up, and arrived at Siedlce on the 8th towards noon, having marched thirty-two miles in fourteen hours, his vanguard being already at Kaluszyn. There he was informed of the fall of Warsaw, and the withdrawal of the troops to Modlin. He received no orders to join them there, nor could he have obeyed any such, without exposing himself to be attacked in flank from Praga, as also by Rosen's corps in pursuit, now increased to 35,000 men, and by the troops coming from Lithuania. As he looked upon the station at Modlin as a *cul de sac* between Prussia and these various hostile corps, he easily persuaded a council of war either to march to

Zamosc for a winter campaign, or to cross the Vistula at Zawichost, and join Rozycki in the palatinate of Cracow. On the same day (the 9th) he arrived at Lukow, where he found an order from Malachowski to go on to Modlin. With this he refused to comply, for the reasons above stated, as also because he could not collect his scattered troops in time. The appearance of Ramorino in the palatinate of Lublin was so unexpected, that several detachments of the enemy were made prisoners; and a party who were watching a bridge thrown across the Vistula at Pogurze completely taken by surprise by General Zawadzki, and but for his credulity, this accident might have changed the face of the war. The Russian commander immediately pretended an armistice, refused to fight, and commanded his men to stick their bayonets in the ground. Zawadzki hesitated. The Russian proposed to occupy the bridge in company, and then having passed over first, suddenly broke it down, leaving 1000 men behind him prisoners. He probably borrowed the idea from the French, who had played the Austrians a similar trick in 1805, when they surprised the bridge over the Danube at Vienna. By this accident, Ramorino, who was advancing full of hope to the bridge, found himself at once cut off from Zamosc, and separated from Zawadzki. In order to rejoin him, he on the 15th approached Opole, where he checked the pursuit of Rosen, but a threatened attack upon his

own rear near Josefow, compelled him to retire within that town. A sharp struggle ensued in the streets, which lasted till the arrival of Zawadzki, and they then fought their way to Rachow, where, to give time for the construction of a bridge at Zawichost, they proposed to make a stand for at least two days. Their hungry, barefooted, and harassed battalions were, meanwhile, daily thinned by desertion, especially amongst the natives of the palatinate, who, partakers of the fatal prejudice which rested the hopes of the insurrection on the preservation of Warsaw, now regarded all as lost. Hearing that the enemy were on the march to fall upon his flank, Ramorino left Rachow the next day, and amid continued skirmishes, reached Borow opposite to Zawichost, and close to the frontier. The expected bridge had not been constructed, and the Poles, reduced to 11,000 men, with whom to oppose 35,000, entered Austria. But before they adopted this deplorable alternative as a solemn protest against foreign invasion, they opened a battery of forty cannon, and mustered their battalions for the last fight of honour. The cannonading lasted several hours, until the ammunition was spent, and then came a long pause.

History, which registers with an iron pen the march of human affairs, may sometimes record man's feelings on such a solemn occasion as the present. "The Russian cannon," relates an eye witness\*, "was

\* Colonel Lach Szyrma.

“ still heard at intervals in the distance, echoing  
“ along the ridge of mountains, and, as its sound  
“ died away, it seemed for the moment to the  
“ Polish patriot, that the last blow for his country  
“ had been struck, and that his efforts had terminated,  
“ as the anxieties of man terminate when the final  
“ struggle of life is over. The patriotic songs, so  
“ often heard in the Polish camps, were hushed ;  
“ here and there horses strayed, deprived of their  
“ riders ;—the soldiers leaned on their arms in  
“ mute despondency ; many of the veterans who  
“ had served in the campaigns of Napoleon, broke  
“ their muskets, while others buried their swords  
“ in secret places, in the hope that they would again  
“ be required in the service of their country.” They  
passed the frontier in the night, and laid down their  
arms at Chwalowice. Prince Czartoryski did not  
accompany them ; he went over to Zawichost,  
animating Rozycki's corps by his presence, and thus  
fulfilling the Pole's oath, to fight so long as a foot  
of his native land remained unenslaved.

Ramorino being thus beyond the boundary, a  
considerable part of the Rosen corps marched into  
the palatinate of Cracow, to assist Rudiger in dispos-  
ing of Rozycki. With a force scarcely 6000 strong,  
this brave general still made head against the over-  
whelming numbers, and on the 22nd of September,  
encountered Rudiger with 18,000 men at Lagow. On  
this occasion C. Rozycki again distinguished him-  
self. The Russians, since the battle of Ilza, had

held him in such dread, that at the appearance of one Volhynian squadron, thirteen squadrons of their cavalry made a sudden halt, excusing themselves by saying, "*bielu czapku nie dajut pardon*," (white caps give no quarter.) They fought all day with unwonted animosity, but fresh reinforcements pouring in against them, the Poles finally followed their comrades into Austria.

As soon as Malachowski reached Modlin on the 9th, he resigned the command, deeming himself unworthy to retain it, after having signed the capitulation of Warsaw, and expressing a hope that his example might be a warning to younger generals. At a military council for the election of a new generalissimo, Dembinski again displayed his want of prudence, by declaring that the army ought to be independent of the civil powers, while on the other hand it was urged that the existence of the Diet and Government were, in the actual crisis, essential to the national dignity. Two parties, the one for war, the other for negotiation, then arose, and the former, though the most numerous, yet, owing to Dembinski's imprudent expression, voted with the latter in favour of General Rybinski, an able officer, but much in years.

On the 11th, eleven senators and seventy deputies, who, true to their manifesto, accompanied the army, met in a monastery at Zakroczym, where they took measures for discharging, as far as they could, their high trust. It was agreed to publish a periodical,



called, "Poland is not lost while we yet live;" and an order was instituted with the motto *usque ad finem*, to be conferred on such as should persevere to the last. A circular, addressed to foreign powers, was also drawn up, which contained, amongst other things, an epitome of the struggle. "We scraped "the walls of our houses," thus it recapitulated their efforts, "and searched old ruins besprinkled "with the blood of our forefathers, in order to obtain "saltpetre. We learned to forge weapons and to "cast cannon,—our churches yielded their silver, and "our widows their mite,—with scythes we attacked "the foe, and wrested the greater part of our muskets "from his hands. We gave arms to our children and "tender women,—we destroyed the harvest in the "ear, and trod under foot the germ of future growth; "and abandoned, amid these struggles and adversities, "in vain imploring support from other nations, must "we now believe that justice does not exist on earth, "that we do not live in a civilized age? In ancient "times it was held infamous to despair of the country's "rescue; happen what may, the Poles shall never be "found guilty of this crime in the most desperate "situation."

Informed of Ramorino's entry into Austria, Rybinski would gladly have joined Rozycki in the palatinate of Cracow; yet, instead of at once attempting it, he resorted to negotiations. At first the Russians appeared to grant every request, always contriving, however, to start some difficulty involving a fresh reference to Paszkiewicz, in order to

amuse the Poles, till Ramorino being disposed of, and themselves encompassed at Modlin, submission would be inevitable. At length an armistice of four weeks was agreed to, during which time the Poles were to evacuate Modlin, and withdraw to the palatinates of Lublin, Cracow, and Kalish. On the 17th, however, Rybinski was informed that Paszkiewicz would cede only the southern part of the Lublin palatinate, and in this arrangement, to prevent further delay, he acquiesced. But the intelligence of Ramorino's retirement into Austria having in the mean time reached the Russian field marshal, he now insisted that that event would suffice to secure peace in the southern provinces. Disgusted with such bad faith, the Poles abandoned Modlin, reached Plock on the 23rd, and resolved to force their passage to Cracow. Dembinski crossed the Vistula with the vanguard, and advanced the same day to Gostyn, having destroyed several detachments of Cossacks. Paszkiewicz, alarmed at their resolution, endeavoured once more to paralyze it by negotiations, for listening to which, the generalissimo was dismissed by the government. The officers, however, would not obey Uminski, the general appointed to succeed him; and Dembinski, the fittest for the task, was recalled; but vexation at this delay, which rendered the junction with Rozycki impracticable, threw him into a fit of illness, and, in consequence, Rybinski was re-appointed. Unconditional submission to Nicholas, not as constitutional king of Poland,

but as emperor of Russia, was demanded by Paszkiewicz, and indignantly rejected, by both army and Diet, who, choosing rather voluntary exile, now turned their steps towards the Prussian territory. The honour of striking the last blow was reserved for Dembinski, and the enemy overtook him on the 4th of October, as he marched in the rear. Previous to the conflict, Paszkiewicz sent him a message remonstrating against such ill-timed obstinacy, to which Dembinski bade the messenger reply, "that if the  
 " marshal thought he had now to do with his  
 " kindred hordes of Asia, he would find himself  
 " mistaken; that the Poles struggled for liberty and  
 " independence, and if heaven yet withheld success,  
 " they would rather seek shelter among civilized  
 " nations than yield to insulting conditions." He then opened a heavy fire of artillery, and commanded the cavalry to charge. Had Rybinski joined with his whole force, that last battle might have been one of the most destructive to the Russians. In the afternoon of the 5th of October, about 24,000 Poles crossed the frontier, amongst whom, scarcely 8000 remained of those who had fought at Grochow; and in the 4th of the line, about 200 only, of the 2000 who commenced the insurrection. So long as the soldiers were permitted to retain their arms, they bore their fate with fortitude, but when summoned to surrender them, as the word of command for the last time sounded in their ears, they burst, like children, into

loud laments. They wept, they embraced their chargers, those faithful companions of their watch and toil, some even died broken hearted on the spot; and no unprejudiced spectator but must have grieved that the colossal work so gloriously begun, should end here and thus. The attention of the European powers was drawn to this spot, and even those least friendly to Poland, respected her affliction, and were silent,—all but France—Sebastiani was not ashamed to utter from the tribune, “*l'ordre regne à Varsovie.*”

The garrisons of Modlin and Zamosc capitulated on an assurance of full amnesty to every individual within the ramparts; but no sooner had Zamosc surrendered, than all the Volhynians and Podolians, with shaven heads, and branded with numbers, were sent into the interior of the empire, which in European idiom, implies Siberia, the mines, or Caucasus.

Thus were the Poles once more enslaved, and doomed to inscribe with their blood the record of their unavailing struggles. Their failure was, in the first instance, owing to the overwhelming numbers of the Russian army. The infantry alone consists of thirty-two divisions — twenty-six of the line, three of grenadiers, and three of the imperial guard;—the cavalry of twenty-one divisions, three of them attached to the imperial guard. Each infantry division contains six regiments of three battalions, the third battalion constituting the reserve. During the late struggle, the whole reserve was called out

to complete and re-organize the three corps of Rosen, Pahlen, and Szachowskoi; and thus each division had eighteen battalions, which, with the artillery attached to thirty-six pieces, might be calculated at 15,000 men: and the twenty-two divisions, therefore, which took part in the war, amounted to 330,000 men. Every cavalry division is composed of four regiments, of six squadrons each, and thus, at the lowest estimate, one cavalry division has 4000 horsemen, and the fifteen, which had entered Poland, would therefore contain 60,000, without counting 30,000 Cossacks. Hence, during the period of eight months, not less than 420,000 Russians had been poured into Poland, of whom fewer than 200,000 escaped death by the sword or by cholera, and 40,000 were captured by the Poles; a fact worthy of remark when it is recollected that Napoleon, at the head of 300,000 men, never made 10,000 Russian prisoners. Since Poland, possessing only 30,000 troops at the outbreak of the insurrection, did that which had never been done before, might she not also, but for her own errors and foreign treachery, have achieved what seemed equally impossible—the defeat of her giant foe? The radical mistake, the making the war defensive within the triangle of Warsaw, Modlin, and Serock, lay with Chlopicki, which involved the gradual exhaustion of the four palatinates thus left to struggle against all Russia. Still Polish valour achieved prodigies, and several times reduced the enemy to the verge of defeat,

as at Grochow, where the opportunity was lost by Krukowiecki's absence and Chlopicki's wound;—after the victory at Dembe Wielkie; in the expedition against the guards; and, finally, when the passage of the Vistula was permitted by Skrzynecki, whilst relying on the promise of intervention, that most insidious and deadly blow dealt by the French Government.

No sooner did Nicholas find Poland in his power, than the work of vengeance began, whilst no arm was lifted, nor a remonstrance heard in her behalf. The ancient hall, where the senate used to assemble, was dismantled;—the army was disbanded;—officers, soldiers, and the flower of the Polish youth, enrolled in Asiatic regiments. All institutions tending to promote science, literature, and the national language, the public and private libraries at Warsaw and Pulawy, the museums,—all were plundered to enrich Moscow. The national colours and armorial bearings were destroyed;—ancient names of provinces abolished, and the constitution shut up in an iron chest under a double lock\*. The national religion was not spared,—the tombs were violated, and their mouldering relics scattered to the winds. Families were transported;—children torn from their parents to be bred up as janissaries of the Czar,

\* Nicholas erected a monument to Alexander in Moscow, which represents him as treading under foot the Polish constitution enclosed in an iron chest.

and murderers of their countrymen; young girls carried off by conscription, and consigned to the paid assassins of their fathers and brothers. Thousands of noble victims pine in Siberia and Caucasus; and, finally, all that history records of Christian martyrdom, or of Jewish and Moorish extirpation, has been converted into a permanent system by Nicholas\*.

Amazed at the extent of Polish emigration, he offered amnesty to privates and non-commissioned officers; but they knew his heart, and would not trust his word. Prussia then joined against these now defenceless warriors, whose personal liberty she had guaranteed to Rybinski. The officers were separated from the men; and these being next persuaded to divide into small parties, were then in several cases driven back into Poland by Prussian bayonets. On the 11th of December, 1831, one of

\* The following anecdote, given to the writer of these pages by a party concerned in it, may serve to illustrate the character of Nicholas. Whilst yet Czarewitch, he had a pregnant bitch, one of whose puppies he had promised to Count A. P. (since dead) at that time Grand Master of the Ceremonies at the Court of St. Petersburg. The Count happening to call upon him on a winter's morning, found his Imperial Highness employed in throwing the puppies one by one upon the chimney fire, and burning them to death, out of pity to the poor animal which had given birth to six young ones. What were the pastimes of Nero in comparison with those of Nicholas? No doubt it is from similar motives of commiseration for Polish mothers, that he destroys their children.



these parties being surrounded by Prussian infantry at Fischau, and commanded to return to Poland or be fired at, announced their determination to retire to France or to die, and refused to advance a step. The bloody scene commenced. The unarmed Poles stood firm, calling on God to witness their murder, whilst the Prussians fired, killed six on the spot, and wounded seven dangerously. The relics of the gallant 4th of the line were shut up for two years in the fortress of Graudenz, and condemned to labour as convicts. Scarcely 7000 escaped; but these were no sooner out of Prussia than they exchanged persecution for sympathy and honour. No conquering army was ever greeted with more enthusiasm than were these sufferers by the Germans. From every town the citizens went out for miles to meet them, with the flags of the different guilds entwined with the Polish colours. Their path was strewn with flowers, and their exploits sung in their native language, while music and artillery proclaimed their entry. Praises of Poland mingled with prayers for her in the churches, the poets mourned her fate; and all classes felt so deeply for the distress and want of the patriots, many of whom had lost immense wealth, that it was proposed to raise a statue at Frankfort-on-the-Main to a compassionate German\*, who had taken off his own coat to put it on a Pole. In their sympathy was much prophetic wisdom. Six months

\* See "Letters of Börne."

after the fall of Warsaw, their ungrateful princes deprived the true-hearted people of their liberties.

It may be asked, where does liberty now exist on the continent ; nay, whether Russian intrigue is not creeping up the cliffs of Albion ? The tears and blood of Europe will reply, and assign the place which the Polish struggle ought to hold in the history of the world. For themselves, the Poles may address the nations in the words of Prince Czartoryski, “ Behold your cause and ours ! We “ appear before you covered with our blood ! The “ injustice done to us is known to you ;—for our “ courage and generosity ask our enemies ;”—and conclude with the poet (Campbell,)

\* \* \* proudly may Polonia's bands  
Throw down their swords at Europe's feet in scorn,  
Saying—“ Russia from the metal of these brands  
“ Shall forge the fetters of your sons unborn ;  
“ Our setting star is your misfortunes' rising morn.”

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LONDON :  
PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.



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